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# (WELLINGTON AND WATERLOO)

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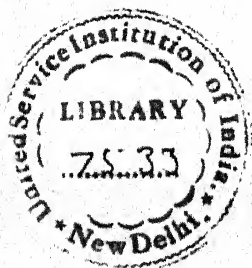
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of India.*

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1852

*"Great in council and great in war,  
Foremost captain of his time,  
Rich in saving common-sense,  
And, as the greatest only are,  
In this simplicity sublime."*

TENNYSON (1852)



# WATERLOO

CRISIS OF THE BATTLE

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Cavalry

Infantry

Artillery

Mile

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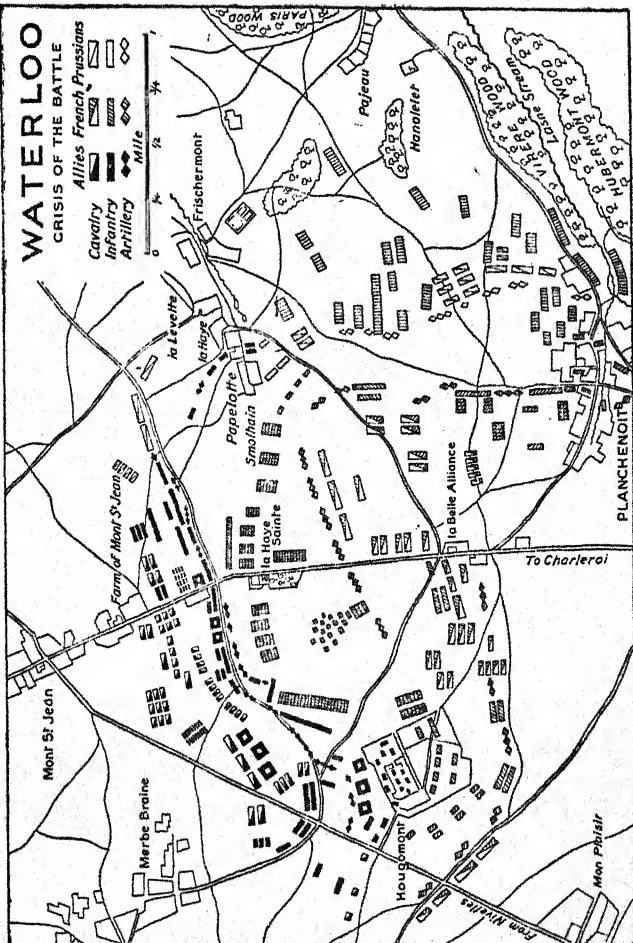
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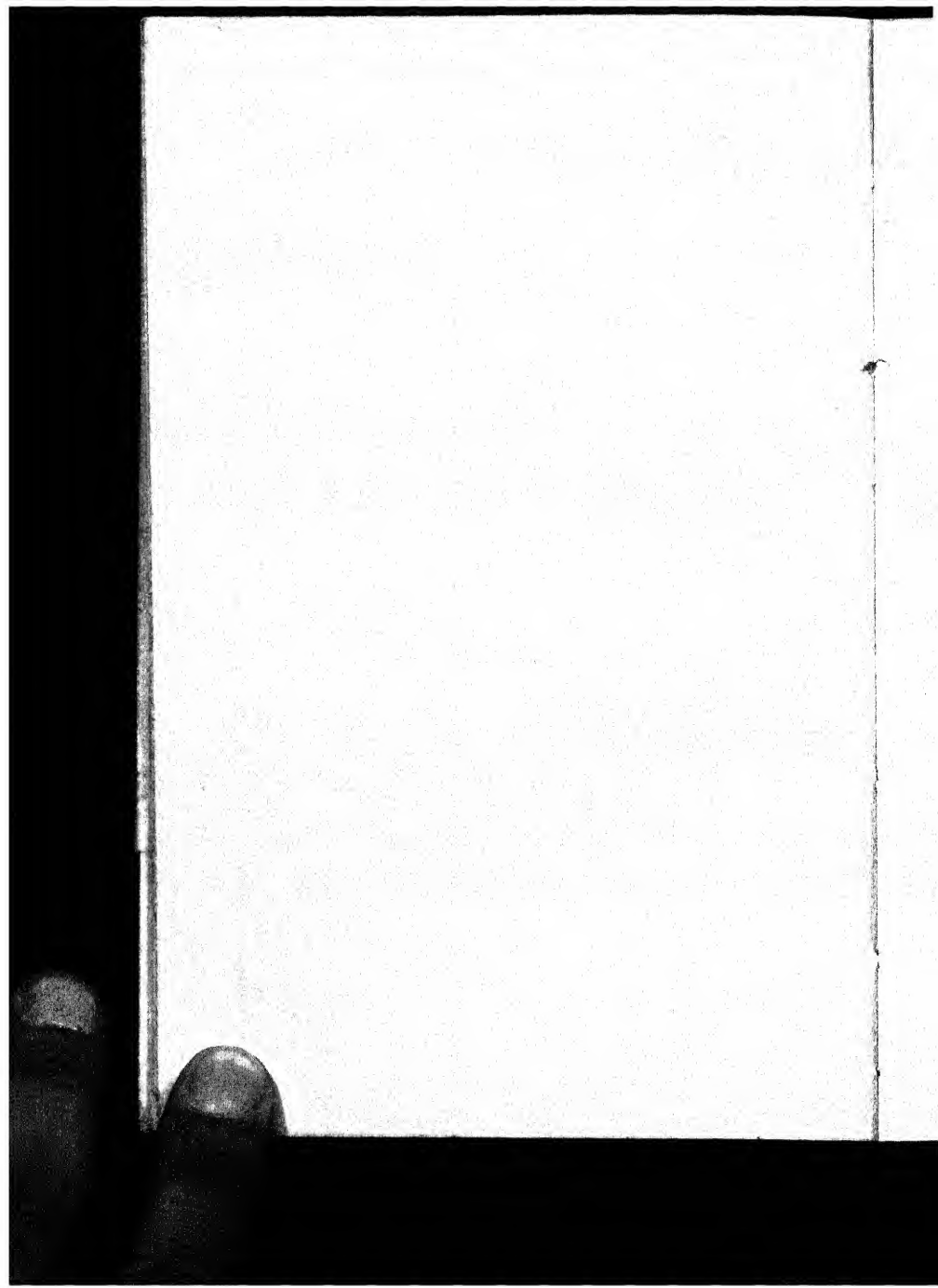
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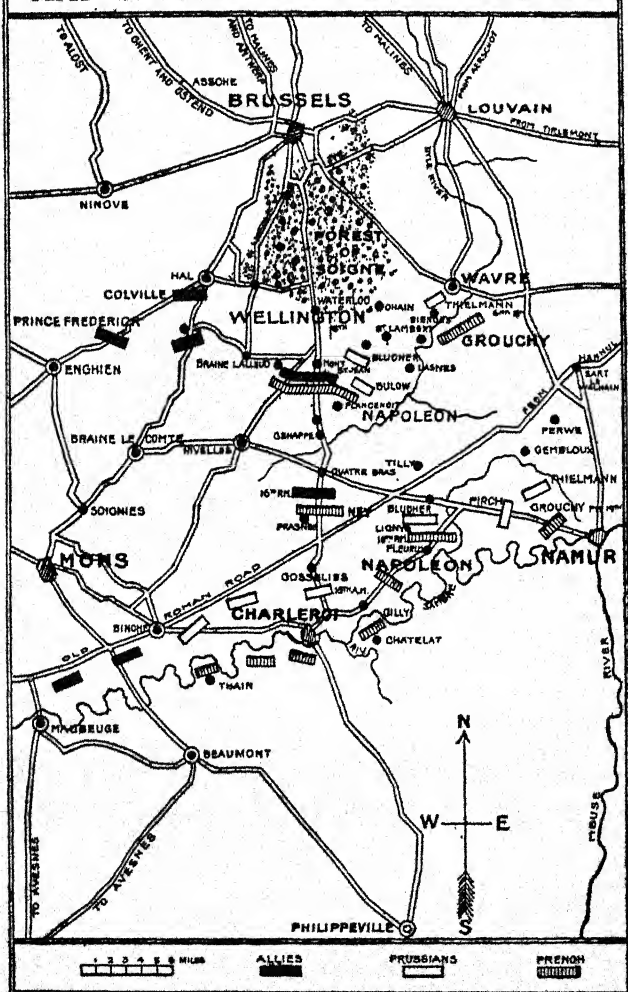
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# MAP OF THE WATERLOO CAMPAIGN.





M. 345.

United Service Institution  
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## WELLINGTON AND WATERLOO

### I

OF England's greatest men two only depend for their fame upon their achievements as soldiers, and both were employed in our foreign wars for the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe. We refer, of course, to Marlborough and Wellington. Louis XIV, who died in 1715, and Napoleon I, who was deposed in 1815, were alike in being absolute monarchs of a type that the Western world could not stomach: it became necessary to destroy the armies and fleets which were the instruments of their ambition, and England's then close ties with Germany led to a military partnership; so that Marlborough and Eugene are coupled in the history of the eighteenth as are Wellington and Blücher in that of the nineteenth century. Our present purpose, however, is to treat of Wellington and tell once more the story of Waterloo.

The first Duke of Wellington was born Arthur Wellesley in 1769. He lost his father, an Irish peer who was distinguished as a musician, at the age of twelve; and his mother, capable and masterful, brought up five sons and three daughters on an exiguous income. What military education Arthur possessed when commissioned as an ensign had been given him at Angers on the Maine, though at Eton he had learnt to box and play the fiddle. His eldest brother, known to history as the Marquess Wellesley, pushed his fortunes in the army, so that under the purchase system he passed through half a dozen corps in quick succession before joining

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the 33rd or West Riding Regiment of Foot, which Arthur Wellesley as a lieutenant-colonel commanded at the age of twenty-four. Meanwhile, as Captain Wellesley, he had become a member of the Irish House of Commons and aide-de-camp to the Viceroy of Ireland. But these political avocations were thrown aside when the great war with France began, and his regiment was ordered to serve under the Duke of York in Belgium and Holland. Before embarking, with characteristic probity Wellesley hypothecated his income for the liquidation of his debts. His conduct in a skirmish at Bortel against Pichegru's Frenchmen was so highly appreciated by his military superiors that he was selected to command the rearguard when our army retreated to its shipping in the spring of 1795. Nevertheless Wellesley was so little enamoured of the prospect of soldiering in the British army that, upon returning to Ireland—his home was at Trim—he solicited employment in the civil service, but the boon was not granted; so in the course of regimental duty he sailed for the West Indies, and nine months later found himself at Calcutta.

By a singular stroke of good fortune the Marquess Wellesley soon came out as Governor-General, and the two brothers worked "hand in glove" to counteract French influence in India and to subdue the potentates who opposed our rule; for although in actual occupation of little more than the Ganges valley from Calcutta to Benares, and the ports of Bombay and Madras, we aimed at exploiting the entire peninsula through the complaisance of native princes. Tippoo, Holkar and Scindia who resisted our policy were crushed in turn, and in this work of "pacification" Colonel Wellesley was conspicuous. He took part in the battle of Mallavelly and in the storming of Seringapatam in 1799, where Tippoo, the Sultan of Mysore, lost his kingdom and his life. He was conducting a campaign against the freebooter, Dhoondiah, at the moment when Napoleon as "premier consul" was crossing the Alps to win fresh renown at Marengo. He mobilised the Indian con-

tingent which proceeded to Egypt in 1801, and would himself have joined Baird's expedition against the French at Alexandria but for a breakdown in health. He then became Governor of Mysore, and on promotion to the rank of major-general after fifteen years' service he marched five hundred miles in six weeks to expel Holkar from Poona. In 1803 with enlarged powers he captured the fort of Ahmednugger from Scindia, won a decisive victory at Assaye, and again beat the Mahratta confederates at Argaum. He was rewarded with the Order of the Bath. Our battles in India were won mainly by Sepoys, trained and led by British officers and stiffened with a score of British regiments, and our opponents were similarly inspired by French agents and soldiers of fortune. Wellesley's intuitive perception of the needs of an army was coupled with amazing industry applied to essentials, and a resolve to use unsparingly his brother's influence to secure the means of success for any undertaking in which he engaged. He performed almost single-handed a multitude of duties which nowadays are discharged by a body of officials called the administrative, technical and departmental staff. Organisation was his *spécialité*. Indeed, his brother the Governor-General had declared: "I believe Arthur's great strength to be rather in the civil than in the military line." Yet he found opportunity to study such works as the *Commentaries* of Cæsar.

After seven years of toil in the plains of India the Sepoy general returned to England to recruit his health, and Sir Arthur Wellesley perceived that in Europe a duel *à mort* between the French Emperor and England had begun, Trafalgar having been balanced by Austerlitz. But for three years Wellesley was allowed to exercise his activities in various ways. As member for Rye his speeches educated the House of Commons in regard to our empire in India; he married, in 1806, Lady Catherine Pakenham, and became Chief Secretary for Ireland; as a brigade commander he joined Lord Cathcart's expedition to Copenhagen in 1807, when the Danish fleet and naval base were forcibly removed

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from the sphere of Napoleonic enterprise. And it was not wholly in virtue of his prominence in the social and political world that Wellesley was selected to command the force which England had determined to send to the assistance of Spain and Portugal, when Napoleon flushed with his successes at Eylau and Friedland seized Lisbon in 1808, and began his campaign against English commerce with *le blocus continental*. But Wellesley was still junior in rank to generals like Sir John Moore, Sir Hew Dalrymple and Sir Harry Burrard, and only his "star" enabled him to land at Mondego Bay, and with 14,000 men engage the French under Laborde at Rolica and Junot at Vimiero, before Burrard arrived to assume command, who in turn was superseded by Dalrymple. These generals, therefore, became responsible for the armistice and treaty by which Marshal Junot and his troops were permitted to quit Portugal otherwise than as prisoners of war. Yet Wellesley was called to account along with Dalrymple and Burrard for the obnoxious convention of Cintra, and pending the result of a court of inquiry Sir John Moore was placed in command of the army of Portugal. Moore invaded Spain and soon found himself opposed by Napoleon in person. He narrowly escaped destruction and beat a retreat to the coast, pursued by Soult's corps, giving battle at Corunna to cover his embarkation. Moore fell in action, Napoleon returned to Paris and Soult occupied Oporto.

Wellesley as a lieutenant-general, reinstated with plenary powers in Portugal in April 1809, and now aided by Beresford who undertook the organisation and training of the Portuguese forces, commenced a series of campaigns which carried his army victorious from the Tagus to Toulouse. No better field could have been chosen for the display of Wellesley's peculiar gifts and attainments. The factors of military success in the Peninsula included the close observation of Napoleon's operations in North Europe, by which the strength and disposition of the French forces in Spain were governed; incessant appeals to the British Cabinet for

a share of the resources which it persisted in squandering in such adventures as the Walcheren expedition ; the appraisement of our allies from the economic and moral as well as martial point of view ; the conciliation of various provincial governments, factions and rival leaders ; the pacification of the inhabitants and the cultivation of harmonious relations with the naval and diplomatic services. Only when each day's work was done in respect of such matters was the English general free to attend to his military concerns. The quantum of labour involved by the necessity of directing both war and policy in the Peninsula is shown by hundreds of despatches written with his own hand. The regents, the juntas, the ministers, the ambassadors, the peoples leaned on his wisdom and courage more and more as time went on, until Wellesley's accomplishments as a soldier were dwarfed by his solid achievements as a ruler *de facto*. Sir Arthur, in May 1809, took Soult by surprise at Oporto while Victor was detained in the Tagus valley. He drove Soult northwards from the Douro to the Minho, and there left him destitute of guns and ammunition. Wellesley now turned towards Victor, and in June moved up the Tagus valley to Talavera. The junta of Seville promised the aid of General Cuesta's army and undertook to provision the English forces in Spain. The food was not supplied and Cuesta afterwards boasted that he had "made the proud Englishman go down on his knees" in order to induce him to fight. Victor and Soult meanwhile had been reinforced, and Victor at the end of July attacked the allies in front while Soult was marching down from Salamanca upon their flank. Victor was repulsed, but Wellesley having lost 6000 men was in no condition to meet Soult, and so retreated to the Guadiana, where the fortress of Badajoz afforded shelter.

He had discovered that the Spanish troops were "entirely incapable of performing any manœuvre, however simple," when Napoleon having routed the Austrians at Wagram began to fill Spain with his veteran troops, and now Viscount Wellington (he had been



raised to the peerage after Talavera) foresaw that he would be hard put to it even to defend Portugal. He repaired to Lisbon in October and reconnoitred all approaches to the capital, which was also his base of supply, and he conceived a plan of defence colossal in its simplicity. He proposed to improve upon nature by scarping the northern slopes of a range of mountains which stretched from the Atlantic to the mouth of the Tagus, to plant artillery along the heights and barricade the northern roads, and with the help of the navy to establish a semaphore telegraph from shore to shore. Behind this mighty barrier the population of Portugal was to be gathered, after each family had burnt its home and destroyed or hidden its provisions. A French army invading Portugal would then encounter the most terrible of all obstacles, a desert, and on the far side of the desert an impregnable fortress which could not be starved into submission while Britain ruled the waves.

Such were the "lines" of Torres Vedras, which employed for twelve months thousands of militia and peasants under 156 engineer officers who cut down whole forests for abattis. But it was the foolish way of Spanish generals to ridicule such defensive measures, and to go about seeking opportunities of displaying the courage of their troops. General Cuesta's successor lost half his army (25,000 men), three-fourths of his guns and the whole of his baggage by a quixotic fight in the open at Ocana, and the Duque del Parque was routed near Salamanca by Kellermann a week later. Wellington's remark on the occasion throws some light on his own methods and hints at the source of his inspiration. "I wonder whether the Spanish officers ever read the history of the American war, or of their own war in the Dutch provinces, or of their own war in Portugal."

When the British army was moved from the Guadiana to the Mondego in December 1809 the French swarmed into Andalusia, so that the junta took refuge at Cadiz and Soult made Seville his headquarters. Wellington spared some troops for the defence of Cadiz under

General Graham, posted Hill's corps in the Tagus valley and watched the northern frontier of Portugal with Crauford's division. And so passed the winter of 1809-10. In the spring came Marshal Massena, the hero of Essling and Wagram, who besieged the fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo which in due course capitulated; for Wellington adhering to his plan of defence would not enter Spain to attack the French, nor would he even risk a battle to relieve Almeida, the Portuguese fortress; but patiently waited for Massena's advance and all the time pushed forward his preparations at Torres Vedras. When all was ready he proclaimed that he would punish as traitors such inhabitants as failed to remove their families and stores into the entrenched camp. To gain further time for wasting the country Wellington accepted battle at Bussaco in August, where the French again experienced the power of defensive tactics; but the British general having attained his object fell back slowly to Torres Vedras followed by Massena, who wrote: "We are marching across a desert; women, children and old men have all fled; in fact, no guide is to be found anywhere." Wellington wintered within and Massena outside the lines, with the result that in March 1811 the French marshal who had been called the "spoilt child of victory" collected his sick and made his way back to Spain, harassed in front and flank by guerillas and the local militia and pressed by Wellington's army in pursuit. Massena turned at bay once—at Sabugal in April—but his dispirited army was no match for the allies. From this time forward Portugal was free.

Meanwhile the Spanish garrison of Badajos had surrendered the fortress to Soult, whose success here was neutralised to some extent by the loss of a battle near Cadiz, where Victor presuming on the incapacity of a Spanish general, La Pena, fell a victim at Barossa to the fine generalship of Graham. Wellington now detached a force under Beresford to recapture Badajos. Soult came up from Seville in May to raise the siege, but Beresford gave battle at Albuera and repulsed the

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French. Ten days before, at Fuentes d'Onor, Wellington had outwitted Massena in similar circumstances; then he recaptured Almeida. But the two frontier fortresses, Badajos and Ciudad Rodrigo, were still in French hands, though closely watched by the allies. Marmont now superseded Massena, and Soult after the Albuera battle was joined by Marmont on the Guadiana; but the French marshals in July, having relieved Badajos and caused Wellington to retreat to Campo Mayor, could not agree upon a plan for attacking the allies and parted at enmity. In September when Marmont was revictualling Ciudad Rodrigo he caught a portion of Wellington's blockading force *flagrante delicto* at El Bodon; but Wellington put a bold face on the matter and stood fast with a couple of divisions in front of the French army—a piece of audacity which Marmont for long refused to credit. He procured siege-guns from England and landed them ostentatiously at Lisbon, whence he secretly reshipped them to proceed up the Douro in readiness for operating against Ciudad Rodrigo. The year 1812 opened auspiciously for the allies, who in January fell upon the garrison of Ciudad Rodrigo and took the whole of Marmont's artillery and in April stormed the fortress of Badajos.

Wellington having thus secured both gateways into Spain from the west began to contemplate the possibility of making a dash on Madrid, expelling the intrusive King Joseph and recovering Spain for the Spaniards. He had caused Hill to drive Girard beyond the Guadiana and now prompted him to destroy the bridge of Almaraz on the Tagus. Napoleon intent on no less a project than the invasion of Russia turned a deaf ear to Marmont's cry for succour, and Wellington hastened to exploit the situation. Leaving Hill on the Guadiana to hold Soult in check he advanced with his main army in June, drove Marmont from Salamanca and seized the French forts on the Tormes. The French marshal after crossing the Douro descended its right bank, took up a flanking position and waited for King Joseph's co-operation. Wellington now halted in some perplexity

and when Marmont, relying on the promise of support, menaced his flanks he was compelled to retrace his steps on pain of losing his communications.

Marmont in July manœuvred Wellington into a position behind the Tormes from which the allied army could only be extricated by a successful battle. The action of July 22 near Salamanca was a most brilliant exposition of tactics on the part of the British general, who beat 40,000 French in forty minutes and pursued his enemy as far as Burgos. Joseph fled from his capital and withdrew Soult from Andalusia, and so by a single happy stroke the Earl of Wellington—his new rank in the peerage was the reward of his *coup* in January—cleared the French out of the western half of the Peninsula. From Madrid at the end of August he issued a proclamation in these terms: "Spaniards, you are reminded that your enemies cannot much longer resist, that they must quit your country if you will only omit to supply their demands for provisions and money." But in truth the success was illusory. Marmont's army under a new leader prepared to reoccupy the Douro valley—King Joseph and Soult had joined Suchet in Murcia—before the allies had perfected the arrangements which are indispensable to maintain an expeditionary force 300 miles from its shipping. Matters were not improved by Wellington's unfortunate decision in October to besiege the castle of Burgos without a battering train, for defeat with heavy loss as the preliminary of retreat produced the worst effects upon an army at no time remarkable for its march discipline. Wellington declared in a general order that "the number of soldiers straggling from their regiments for no reason excepting to plunder is a disgrace to the army," and his criticism of the regimental officers left nobody in doubt as to the prime cause of demoralisation—"the officers lost all command over their men."

Hill marched two hundred miles to rejoin the main army at Salamanca and so increased Wellington's force to 68,000 men in November, when King Joseph concentrated 90,000 men upon the Tormes and threatened

the allies with destruction. But while the king and his generals disputed about a plan of attack Wellington decamped, and reached Ciudad Rodrigo with only slight damage to his rearguard. That the Burgos expedition was a blunder Wellington admitted, and the alarming effects of a retrograde movement on his ill-knit forces gave Wellington food for thought during the winter. He came to a momentous decision: he would procure the aid of the navy, secure a new base, and in launching his army once more against the French he would bid Portugal farewell for ever. Wellington at the end of December went to Cadiz to confer with the Cortes in regard to the reorganisation of the Spanish army of which he had been made captain-general. He could write good French and read Spanish perfectly and his letters to Don Vega show how completely he plumbed the depths of Spanish incapacity. He soon realised that unless he could direct to some useful end that sporadic warfare in which as a form of insurrection the Spaniards excelled he would gain little by his new distinction. Fortunately these guerilla operations flourished exceedingly in the north, in the Asturias and the Basque provinces where the great road from France ran parallel with the sea-coast, so that the partidas could swoop down upon the French convoys and escape any ill consequences by a flight to British war-vessels. Wellington contrived moreover to carry off three respectable contingents of Spanish infantry, which under Giron, Morillo and Longa were found not unworthy to fight shoulder to shoulder with British and Portuguese regulars, while Mina's guerillas and the horsemen of Julian Sanchez might be depended on to hang on the skirts of victory.

In May 1813 the Earl of Wellington set forth again to confront the French army on the Douro, while his left wing under General Graham, traversing the *Tras os Montes* region, wheeled up against the French right at the *Esla*. This combination proved too strong for King Joseph's array, who retreated swiftly behind the *Ebro* where already the king's household and private

baggage had been despatched for safety. Wellington followed as far as Burgos which he found in ruins ; and then to avoid the forts of Pancorbo he turned northward, and fording the Ebro near its source swept down its left bank upon Vittoria, cutting the French off from the sea-coast and so opening all the northern ports except Santona and Bilbao. English vessels now entered Santander, the seaport of Madrid, and here a dépôt and hospital were established while the guerillas invested Santona, called the Gibraltar of Cantabria. As Napier says : " This single blow severed the connection of the English force with Portugal. That country was cast off by the army as a heavy tender is cast from its towing-rope, and all the British military establishments were broken up and transferred by sea to the coast of Biscay." And this is strategy, the manifestation of a power which differs from the mere ability to fight, a power which at that time was wielded by only one man in Spain among the many who deemed themselves professors of the military art. At the battle of Vittoria on June 21, where 6000 men a-side were placed *hors de combat*, the French were routed so thoroughly that Wellington became possessed not only of 143 brass guns, of the ammunition and warlike stores removed from Madrid, Valladolid and Burgos, and of the equipment in general of the French army, but also of the works of art and other valuables purloined by the French from Spanish museums. The French abandoned likewise five millions of dollars ; and it was this shower of gold that unhappily diverted 80,000 combatants from the proper business of pursuit, so that Joseph's troops stripped of their impedimenta escaped by devious routes to France, giving up Bilbao, a Spanish seaport, whose people requited our services by refusing shelter to the wounded.

In the middle of July there was not a French soldier in Spain save Suchet's corps in Catalonia, which still contended with the force brought from Sicily by Sir John Murray, and the garrisons of the northern fortresses which Wellington had already so closely blockaded



that they were virtually prisoners of war. The English general had broken the French power in the Peninsula and the Spanish and Portuguese peoples were again free to live under their own institutions. Yet at this period Wellington's chief anxiety was caused by "the creatures who govern at Cadiz," whom he had solicited both on behalf of the Spaniards then with the French army, to save these turn-coats from punishment, and on behalf of the Spanish troops with the British army, to procure them food, equipment and arrears of pay. He reproached the junta in good set terms :

"This is not the first time that the engagements solemnly entered into with me, after full and repeated discussions, have been broken. . . . I feel that I have been most unworthily treated in these transactions by the Spanish government even as a gentleman."

Then fresh obstruction on the part of the Bilbaoese was encountered, who refused to allow stores for the army to be landed at their port. Indeed the "patience of Job" was needed to bear with Spanish waywardness. Napoleon at Dresden, pausing a moment in his life-and-death struggle with Russians and Prussians to survey the collapse of his *château en Espagne*, perceived that the English general's next leap forward would carry him to the French frontier; and therefore he confided to Soult, who had the *tête militaire*, the task of staying the flight of Joseph's legions at the Pyrenees and the Bidassoa river in order to defend the soil of France. Wellington had already followed the French thus far and had occupied all the passes, but halted there to cover the siege of San Sebastian and the blockade of Pampeluna. Soult now in supreme command gave proof of his quality as a general, and for the best part of a twelvemonth put Wellington through his paces in strategy and tactics, offensive and defensive; in mountain warfare, in siege operations, in marches and manœuvres, as well as in the sort of fighting which Wellington called "fair bludgeon work"; and if the preposterous notion of the British Cabinet had been persisted in, of withdrawing from the Peninsular army

its great leader in order to employ him in Germany, the Duke of Dalmatia would doubtless have soon recovered all the lost ground. Our Prince Regent with great good sense vetoed this scheme and despatched to the Marquis of Wellington the baton of a field-marshal.

Soult's proclamation to his troops on July 23 exhorted them to advance to the relief of the fortresses. "It is on the Spanish soil that your tents must next be pitched and from thence your resources drawn." Two days later his columns poured over the passes at Maya and Roncesvalles and attacked the right wing of the allies. Soult drove all before him for two days and gained the village of Sorauren, when Wellington suddenly appeared among the troops—he had been preparing to storm San Sebastian—and rapidly massed on his right. Ten separate engagements took place in the mountains, and the fighting may be judged from the fact that in three days a company of the 92nd Regiment was reduced from 82 to 15 effectives. Soult was driven back over the Pyrenees and for a month lay quiet; but on the last day of August while our men were assaulting the outworks of San Sebastian he attempted a diversion by crossing the Bidassoa to attack Wellington's left wing. Soult's blow fell mainly upon the Spaniards, who staunchly held the hill of San Marcial in the presence of "El Gran Lord" and declined the aid of the British reserve. When the French garrison of San Sebastian surrendered on September 8 nothing remained to menace the left of the army or interrupt our communications with the Bay of Biscay. On our right Pampeluna was closely blockaded by Don Carlos, who in turn was covered by Mina's guerillas in the pass of Roncesvalles. And then Wellington prepared for the stroke that was to place his army on French territory and so compensate the allies in northern Europe for the loss of the battle of Dresden. Wellington early in October took the French by surprise, attacking Soult's centre at the Vera Heights (La Rhune) and threatening his line of retreat to Bayonne by Ainhoa by fording the Bidassoa near Irun. His success compelled



Soult to withdraw to the line of the Nivelle, which he proceeded to fortify in all haste since the fall of Pampe-luna was imminent, while hope had been abandoned of receiving aid from Suchet, who now was striving to maintain for the Emperor his only foothold in Spain though the disaster at Leipzig (October 16-18) was felt to be the precursor of his ruin.

The invasion of France by Austria, Prussia and Russia during the winter of 1813-14 demanded on the part of Napoleon a concentration of forces on his eastern frontier, but Wellington clung to Soult in a manner that forbade reinforcements being sent from the south. In November he drove the French from their defences on the Nivelle—defences which Soult fondly imagined would cost Wellington 25,000 men to break through—by manœuvres on a front of fifteen miles with an army of 90,000 combatants and 95 guns. Hill's corps on the right crossed the river near its source and moved down the valley, Beresford's corps stormed the great redoubts in the centre, while Hope's corps on the left—supported by a naval squadron which bombarded the fort of Socoa—seized the Bayonne route when Soult hard pressed weakened his forces about St. Jean de Luz. The allies took 51 guns and 1200 prisoners—each side lost some 3000 men in battle—and drove Soult back to his last line of defence, defined by the suburbs of Bayonne in the north and the river Nive as far up as Itzassu eastward. But now a check occurred of an unexpected kind, for Wellington was compelled to send all the Spaniards to the rear, save Morillo's contingent, in order to avoid an uprising of the inhabitants, whom the Spanish troops proposed to maltreat in the fashion which had been set by the French army in Spain. Wellington would not tolerate such reprisals, but with an army thus reduced at the moment when he needed drafts to replace casualties, the general could do little for a month but resume his political correspondence and "join the glad throng" at St. Jean de Luz, where two packs of hounds were kennelled.

Wellington's next plan involved the temporary division of his forces, for he sent Hill and Beresford across the Nive to attack Soult's left while Hope demonstrated in front of Bayonne. The manoeuvre was successful so far as it went; yet Marshal Soult on December 10 wrote to prepare the War Minister for news of Wellington's overthrow, and secretly massed 60,000 men and 40 guns to attack Hope's corps, while he detained Hill and Beresford with his garrison troops (8000) and some gunboats in the Adour. But the fatal want of resolution which beset Soult at critical moments again made itself apparent, and the English commander contrived to keep the French at bay until his reserves could be brought up from St. Jean de Luz, Ciboure, Arbonne and Ustaritz. Wellington then strengthened his left at the expense of his right by recalling Beresford, which Soult perceiving attacked Hill with vigour on December 13. Hill's corps fought heroically to gain time for Wellington to redeem his error, and actually with 14,000 men and 14 guns withstood Soult's attack with 35,000 men. The English general was well served by fortune this day, or he would have lost two fine divisions. In the afternoon he was able to reinforce Hill with five divisions and then, of course, the crisis was over. Soult had lost the chance of his lifetime and Wellington was not again tempted to despise his enemy, even an enemy whom he had always beaten.

By the end of the year 1813 Soult had definitively abandoned a rôle in which he had failed to shine and resorted to defensive strategy—the stronger form of war as Clausewitz calls it—and this form of strategy Napoleon also adopted for his campaign in the east of France. The moment for the change was propitious, for the British Cabinet began to clamour for news of Wellington's advance wherewith to pacify our allies on the Rhine; and the most loyal servant of the Liverpool administration now exerted himself to comply with the demands of the Government, though he reminded Earl Bathurst that he was without money to pay for supplies in the country—on January 8 there was not a shilling in the

military chest—and that he could not convey provisions from the coast without additional transport. At such a crisis Wellington did not hesitate to collect all the coiners and die-sinkers in his army and fabricate gold Napoleons. Fortunately the peasantry, far from being hostile, regarded the coming of the allies as the only mitigation of their sufferings during the six years' war; since the requisitions of French generals had stripped them almost bare and that which was left of their store of foodstuffs had become the more valuable; but Wellington's commissariat officers did not haggle about prices.

This factor in the case more than tactical victories determined Wellington to persevere in a task almost beyond his strength. With the help of the French people he could maintain his troops and join battle as often as Soult stood at bay. Without such aid and comfort the allies would have been shipwrecked in France, and the retreat to the coast at Passages would have matched the retreat to Corunna. Soult conceived rightly that his mission was to supplement Napoleon's efforts by prolonging the war in the south of France, checking the invader at every turn, diminishing his numbers by leisurely retreats drawing him hither and thither, so lengthening his communications and affording an opportunity to Suchet to strike him in a vital part. But at first Soult dispersed the French divisions behind the Adour and the Gaves, eastward from Bayonne to Peyrehorade and thence southward to Navarrens, keeping his central reserve at Orthez, an angular position which greatly embarrassed Wellington, since whether the allies moved north towards Bordeaux or eastward on Toulouse the French would bar one route and flank the other. Moreover the French still held S. Jean Pied de Port and the pass of Jaca, by which Suchet might approach from the south. Santona too still held out, for our blockade by sea and land was ineffective. Napoleon meanwhile had opened his campaign brilliantly, beating Blücher's Prussians five times in a fortnight. The menace of Bayonne was

removed when Wellington spared his best general and 12,000 men to blockade the garrison, and closed the Adour to French convoys coming down the river from Port de Lannes; then he invested S. Jean Pied de Port with Mina's Spaniards and by the middle of February had broken Soult's centre at Garris and S. Palais on the Bidouze.

His operations were hampered again by the Spaniards, for Morillo's troops had incensed the inhabitants by plundering while the local government at Santander threatened to close the harbour to our supply ships and expel our sick and wounded from the hospitals we had built there. The English Cabinet during this time engaged the general in a tiresome correspondence relating to a project to remove the army to Holland and also sought his advice in regard to the defence of Canada, afterwards despatching to Holland the troops needed by Wellington to make good the waste of war. Soult too had his difficulties, for Napoleon began to call upon him for men and guns; and desertion grew as the political situation became clearer to his troops, while Bourbon adherents began to raise their heads again at Bordeaux, at Pau and at Tarbes. Wellington at the end of February pushed Soult across the Gave d'Oleron at Sauveterre and blockaded Navarreins with Morillo's Spaniards. Soult now concentrated at Orthez behind the Gave de Pau and gave battle on February 27. Defeated, Soult led his army northwards towards Agen and Wellington pursued as far as St. Sever, where he halted for a week and despatched Marshal Beresford with two divisions to Bordeaux in order to secure the Garonne as a port for the supply of the army. Sir John Hope and Admiral Penrose meanwhile had gained possession of the mouth of the Adour and closely invested the citadel of Bayonne. Morillo and Mina found congenial occupation in guerilla warfare against the partisan corps raised by Generals Harispe and Paris. Soult now took steps to fortify Toulouse, a walled city he meant ultimately to defend; but for another month he vexed Wellington by movements up and down the

Adour between Aire and Tarbes, and while the allies held the Aire-Pau road Soult suddenly crossed the Adour in their front at Maubourg and threatened an attack. Wellington's field force was now reduced to 20,000 bayonets and 2500 sabres, and fearing that Soult had been reinforced by Suchet he took up a position for defence. But Soult's heart failed him at the last moment and he withdrew to Rabastens, whence marching up the right bank of the Adour he reached Tarbes. Wellington meanwhile had been reinforced by Freyre's and Giron's Spaniards and by Ponsonby's cavalry, and he now followed Soult with 40,000 bayonets, 6000 sabres and 55 guns and attacked the French rearguard at Vic Bigorre. Soult on March 20 held the Tarbes-Trie road and sent off his baggage to St. Gaudens. Wellington attacked at Tarbes and fought from noon till nightfall the "sharpest" battle of his life.

Soult having manœuvred Wellington over fifty miles of country for three weeks, and so caused him to disorganise his army by detachments, now set out for Toulouse. Even before Orthez had been reached the pass of Jaca connecting Soult with Suchet, and the magazine at Dax on the Bordeaux route, demanded garrisons; and other military posts were established for the effective occupation of the country between the Landes and the Lower Pyrenees; yet Wellington the day after the battle of Tarbes made his preparations to march to the Garonne. He desired to approach Toulouse from the south, but a reconnaissance to Cintegabelle showed him that the country was impracticable for guns and then he moved down the left bank to Grenade, and there on April 7 he crossed the Garonne. Within a week he had put Soult to flight. He attacked the fortress on its eastern front on April 10 and battled for twelve hours. The next day was spent by the allies in replenishing their ammunition; but Wellington sent his cavalry to seize the southern roads and this disposition so alarmed Soult for his communication with Suchet that he resolved to leave his sick in the hands of the enemy and decamp by Villefranche to Castelnau-dary.

Soult dispatched his impedimenta by canal to Carcassone, at which point he begged Suchet to join him, and fled from Toulouse followed by Wellington; but on April 17, as the rival armies were about to engage once more, Napoleon's staff-officer reached Soult with news of his abdication. Napoleon on March 26 had received his *coup de grâce* at Fere Champenoise, where the Prussians captured his ammunition and stores, arms, caissons and equipage of all kinds, and a few days later the Emperor of Russia entered Paris. News travelled slowly in those days, or the fierce battle of Toulouse would have been avoided and also a sanguinary affair which took place two days later at Bayonne, where the brave French garrison sallied forth in the night and before being beaten back laid low eight hundred of the besiegers and captured the commander, Sir John Hope. Nor was this even the final act of the Peninsular War, for the French still held Santona, Figueras, Barcelona, Tortosa, Morella, Peniscola, Saguntum and Denia; and these fortresses were recovered, not by force of arms, but by the terms of a general peace; nor was Barcelona yielded up by its French governor until the end of May.

Meanwhile English war-vessels had conveyed Napoleon from France to Elba and Louis XVIII from Dover to Calais in order that the Bourbons might resume their rule at Paris. Wellington had been hurried on diplomatic missions from Toulouse to Paris, from Paris to Madrid and from Madrid to Bordeaux. Here he published his Farewell Order on June 14. The Portuguese and Spanish forces then marched back to their several provinces, but the units of the regular army of the island Power took shipping at Bordeaux and Boulogne, some for England and some for America. "Thus the war terminated and with it all remembrance of the veteran's services" is the epitaph of its greatest historian, William Napier. Wellington reached London at the end of June to take his seat in the House of Lords, his several patents as baron and viscount, earl, marquis, and duke being there read to him who had left England



six years before a commoner. His companions in arms—Hope, Graham, Cotton, Hill and Beresford—now received peerages. He attended the House of Commons to return thanks for “the noblest gift that any subject had ever received,” and at the national thanksgiving service at St. Paul’s Cathedral at the restoration of peace in July he sat at the right hand of the Prince Regent. The victorious general having sheathed his sword at the age of forty-six proceeded to Paris to serve his country as ambassador. For three years he played an important part on the European stage as the colleague of Blücher and Schwarzenberg and as the counsellor of Alexander of Russia, Fernando of Spain, Francis of Austria, Louis of France and such minor royalties as the King of the Netherlands. During this period too he was forced once more into active service, and in the province of South Brabant, not far from Ramillies, Oudenard and Malplaquet, the scene of Marlborough’s great battles, he fought his last fight, and added to his long list of dignities that of Prince of Waterloo.

## II

HISTORY, which professes not only to record the events of the past but to account for them and trace their effects, has failed in its popular form, at least, to explain the phenomenon of Waterloo. Why should the brief campaign of 1815, which culminating in the battle of June 18 cannot vie with Austerlitz in respect of novelty, with Salamanca in respect of skill or with Leipzig in respect of grandeur, have made so much noise in the world? That is the question often put but rarely answered. We might here be content to say that the memory of Waterloo is undying by reason of its appeal to the imagination—a fact which Byron was the first to recognise, whose few stanzas will perpetuate the story of the great fight in Belgium as an ancient ballad preserved that of Chevy Chase. The background of the picture, however, is worth closer study than it usually receives.

In dismissing Napoleon to Elba the allies believed they had put the coping-stone on their labours in the cause of peace, and the possibility of such an anti-climax as the Emperor's resurrection was undreamt of. Yet when he reappeared, in circumstances so romantic as to fascinate the civilised world, nothing seemed more natural. At the Tuileries the white flag was pulled down and the tricolour hoisted without ceremony and with little remark. As Napoleon's adventure developed the dramatic interest grew and for one hundred eventful days the world's hopes rose and fell. There was plot and counterplot. The fate of Europe hung in the balance as flashes of success-compelling vigour alternated with lapses into inertia on the part of this wonderful



man; and then ensued a classic battle, a ruined cause and forty years of peace. What things are summed up in the word Waterloo will appear if we consider that Napoleon's domination in 1805-8 had attained a pitch at which it was feasible for him to create his brother Joseph King of Spain; his brother Louis King of Holland; his brother Jerome King of Westphalia; his brother-in-law, Marshal Murat, King of Naples; and his stepson, Eugene Beauharnais, Viceroy of Italy. The French Emperor directly controlled the whole region west of the Rhine, and beyond that river northwards as far as the Elbe at Hamburg. The nations east of this frontier line he treated as England treated the native states of India, and their territories became his granaries, his recruiting areas and places of arms. Those French marshals who were not commanding armies became the military governors of captured fortresses and the satraps of his empire.

Napoleon's sudden fall in 1814 threw upon his enemies the tremendous task of reconstructing the map of Europe. The Vienna Congress was among other things a boundary commission. To anticipate the results of a year's diplomacy it may be said here that France was to set back her borders to the frontier line of 1792. Belgium, which had been wrested from Spain by the Austrians and from Austria by the French, was now to be united to Holland. Holland's erstwhile ruler, deposed by the French in 1795, was recalled as King of the Netherlands in order to reign over the provinces known as the Low Countries—Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg. Austria was compensated for her dogged resistance to Napoleon by having dominion over Lombardy and Venice, so extending her frontier to the Alps. Prussia was to recover all that France had ravished from her and to acquire fresh provinces west of the Rhine on the flank of her enemy, besides receiving a huge donation in aid of her national debt. Russia's claim to seven millions of Poles was allowed. Hanover as an appanage of the British crown had been seized and dismembered by Napoleon, but now was to

be restored as a kingdom which the Duke of Brunswick was to inherit in certain contingencies. England who had contributed 600 millions to the expenses of the French war, took only Heligoland ; but her real interests lay in the silent resumption of her position as the world's transport-agent, which Napoleon's "continental system" had disturbed. Malta and Mauritius, Ceylon and the Cape, were secured to her by international law. The minor states of Germany were surveyed and rival claims assessed if not satisfied. Wurtemberg and Bavaria were to remain kingdoms as created by Napoleon. The Duke of Saxe-Weimar was made a grand-duke and his domains enlarged. A new kingdom was created for the ruler of Nassau out of fragments of twenty-three small German states. Such were the political and territorial changes mooted as soon as Napoleon's abdication was signed in 1814, but they were not effected without months of acrimonious discussion not far removed from strife.

Austria and Prussia were unwilling to restore to Poland a portion of her confiscated territory. An intrigue to oust Marshal Bernadotte, monarch-elect of Sweden, and recall the exiled Gustavus was frustrated by Russia. Austria combated the desire of France to see a Bourbon on the throne of Naples. The King of Saxony, deprived of half his domains for aiding Napoleon with a contingent, keenly felt his humiliation. Certain German princes deemed themselves affronted by the restoration to sovereignty of the landgrave of Hesse-Homburg. And it was significant of much else that the allies kept their armies on a war footing during the debate, and that England, France and Austria entered into a secret compact inimical to Russia and Prussia. Lord Castlereagh summed up the situation in saying :

"Never at any former period was so much spoil thrown loose for the world to scramble at."

The state of France was a reflection of the upheaval around her, as we may gather from the Duke's dis-

patches. And what Wellington knew about France was even more fully known to Napoleon in exile, through newspapers and visitors and his secret agents. Paris and the provinces were separate entities. The Catholics reviled the Protestants and both sects were held in contempt by disciples of Count Volney. In the north-west were "les terribles denominations de Vendées et de Chouans," and the southern port which had given the "Marseillaise" to the republic was now frantically legitimist in sentiment. The old and the new nobilities, the emigrés and the marshals, mingled like oil and water. The King was weak and inexperienced. The disbanded troops, reinforced by prisoners of war now returning to France in tens of thousands, formed a host of starving politicians who toasted the violet and declared "elle reparaitra en printems." The army which had tired of war under the Emperor was now tired of peace under the King. "Louis XVIII is a very good sort of person, but 'vive le petit caporal'" cried the soldiers who received the King's pay. In the scramble for pelf and power the emigrants showed that they had "learned nothing and forgotten nothing"; and though Louis himself might have been tolerated his entourage was detested, the Court favourite and minister, the Count de Blacas, being singled out for denunciation.

Wellington writing to Dumouriez, the hero of Valmy and Jemmapes, at the end of November, said :

"Cette malheureuse révolution et ses suites ont ruiné le pays de fond en comble. Tout le monde est pauvre, et ce qui est pis, leurs institutions empêchent qu'aucune famille devienne riche et puissante. Tous doivent donc nécessairement viser à remplir, non comme autrefois pour l'honneur de les remplir, mais pour avoir de quoi vivre."

Of course the officers of Napoleon's army had been sacrificed in order to promote sprigs of the old nobility, and ten million landed proprietors were alarmed by a proposal to restore to their Bourbon owners estates which the republic had confiscated twenty years before. That these were elements of danger in a country like

France, who can doubt? The ribaldry of pamphleteers and caricaturists added fuel to the flame. Then the treaty made with Napoleon at Elba had provided a pension of two and a half million francs a year, but this sum was never paid to him; his wife and child were detained in Austria. With this knowledge of the political and social conditions in France it will be less difficult to understand why Napoleon, who had been driven from his capital in March 1814 with cries of "Down with Bonaparte," "No conscription," "No consolidated duties," and who had barely escaped with his life from the populace as he passed through Provence on his way to the coast, should within six months regain confidence and begin to indulge hopes of a restoration. Napoleon was at least a great employer, a good master, a liberal paymaster, as thousands of his dependants now discovered and allowed him to know; for Elba was close to Naples where Murat reigned, and Pauline Bonaparte, his wife, went to and fro, while men of the guard were encouraged to visit their relations in France. According to Bourrienne, who corresponded with all parties, Napoleon at Elba now projected a fresh invasion of Austria, engaging Murat to seize Milan and hold North Italy in order to cover the concentration of another *grand armée*, while Davout at Paris and other marshals manœuvring behind the fortresses were to render France secure; and if, as the ex-Emperor confessed, Austria had in bygone years paid him 300 millions of francs in consideration of two treaties of peace such a scheme would have peculiar attractions for a whilom monarch who was now reduced to taxing the Elbese peasantry. Indeed, only by such enterprises could he hope to keep a large army in good humour.

Wellington in the autumn of 1814 had accompanied the Crown Prince of the Netherlands on a tour of the frontier defences, and on returning to his embassy had left engineer officers in Belgium to continue the work of inspection. His report to Lord Bathurst from Paris in September described the frontier as extending from

Liège along the Meuse and the Sambre to Namur and Charleroi, and thence by Mons and Tournay to the North Sea, a region intersected by roads, canals and rivers leading into French territory and dominated by French fortresses. Nineteen places were chosen for treatment by our fortress engineers, viz. Liège, Huy and Namur on the Meuse; Charleroi on the Sambre; Louvain on the Dyle; Mons on the Haine; Ath, Grammont and Dendermonde on the Dender; Tournay, Oudenarde and Antwerp on the Scheldt; Menin, Courtray and Ghent on the Lys; Ypres, Furney and Nieuport on the Yser; and Ostend the maritime base: and though the revolutionary war had tended "to put strong places out of fashion" Wellington advised that the old fortifications should be restored together with all their contrivances for flooding the country as an obstacle to the enemy's advance, and that earthworks be provided with "modern improvements for the flanks," so that from the Scheldt to the sea the line of communication with Holland might be secured by small garrisons, and the field army thus be set free to operate on the left of that line. Wellington declared this to be the only way of "settling the minds of the people to the cession," as the French "who now think they can march into Belgium as they could into Alsace would, if the Netherlands' frontier were fortified, know that the conquest would mean some broken heads."

In February there was talk about beginning the defences in 1816 but further reports were to be submitted; and meanwhile Austria undertook to move 150,000 men into Italy to eject Murat, provided that England would furnish £70,000 a month as well as grain from Malta. Wellington had also indicated certain points where a defending army could make a stand, though to fortify such positions prematurely would ensure their being turned by the enemy; for example, at La Trinité and at Renaix, behind Tournay; on the high grounds about Blaton, between Tournay and Mons; about Mons and along the course of the Haine from Binch towards Mons; about Nivelles and between Nivelles and Binch;

and lastly the entrance to the Forest of Soignies by the high road to Brussels from Binch, Charleroi and Namur.

Such were the general measures of defence recommended by the Duke after a cursory view of the frontier which at least helped him to understand the elaborate reports of his engineer officers. But no action was taken between September and March by the young Prince who, as heir to the crown, ostensibly commanded all the forces stationed in the Low Countries, including the British garrison left there by General Graham of Barossa fame. At the end of the year 1814 the neighbours of France were on the alert, because "the people of this country are so completely ruined by the revolution, and they are now suffering so severely from the want of plunder of the world that they cannot go on without it, and they cannot endure the prospect of a peaceable government." Louis had appointed his Bourbon adherents to be governors of royal palaces and of the military ports and castles, while Soult was made War Minister as a sop to the army. Yet "the truth is," said Wellington, "the King of France without an army is no king"; and in January there were turbulent scenes at Rennes in Brittany and even at Paris. And meanwhile the allies had reached that stage of their deliberations when the Prussian General Muffling wrote: "*Il paroît que nous sommes décidé à la guerre si on nous dispute la Saxe.*" Napoleon learnt of all these little rifts within the lute and judged that the moment was come to strike. He left Elba on February 26, landed in France a few days later and slept at the Tuileries on March 20. It was the most characteristic and the most daring of all the acts of this modern Cæsar. The French people, veering always from the violent to the supine in politics, were just now prepared to acquiesce in any form of government if backed by military power, and so in securing the army Napoleon would secure France.

Louis then behaved like his brother before him, flying from his throne to obtain the aid of foreign princes



against his own subjects. The defeat of the allies at Valmy in 1792 had cost Louis XVI his head and his successor evidently wished to run no risks. He even left thirty-six million crowns in the treasury at Paris, and a similar sum, or its equivalent in valuables, at St. Omer. Louis had waited, however, to see how the provinces received the ex-Emperor, and sending for Marshal Ney—who had ended the campaign of 1814 by opposing Napoleon's wish to continue the struggle—he had ordered him to organise a force to check Napoleon's advance up the Rhone valley. But Ney, on arriving at Besançon in the middle of March, found the King's troops in a state of mutiny and their guns in the hands of the inhabitants; his advanced guard deserted at Bourg. In despair he cried: "It is impossible for me to stop the water of the ocean with my own hand," and so yielded to the solicitation of Napoleon's emissaries. The Emperor having secured this marshal's adhesion left him on tenter-hooks for three months. Marshal Oudinot, who commanded the royal troops at Metz, attempted like Ney to interrupt Napoleon's progress, but his men refused to turn their weapons against their old leader. Marshal Macdonald was sent on a similar errand, but when the Emperor stood forth at Melun the veterans in an ecstasy of joy went over to him and it was the marshal who took flight.

Napoleon's reappearance at Paris healed for the moment all strife in the camp of the allies, who formed a great resolution to unite against the common foe. They declared that "*comme ennemi et perturbateur du repos du monde il s'est livré à la vindicte publique.*" These were brave words, but when the question of ways and means came to be discussed there was a woeful change in temper. Unanimously the Powers protested they could do nothing without subsidies, and even small states like Bavaria and Hesse made money a *sine qua non*. Prussia and France demanded arms and ammunition as well as gold from England. Wellington exercised his accustomed *flair* and guided matters to the point where England's chief interests lay.

He sent Colonel Hardinge to spy upon Napoleon and advised his Government to put the forces then in Belgium at the disposal of the King of France, offering to rejoin the army or "do anything you choose." The general view at the end of March was that "no measure of war ought to be adopted in regard to France . . . excepting on the invitation of the King"; but military plans were nevertheless prepared, and these plans contemplated as a *dernier ressort* a vast scheme of invasion.

The allied forces were to deploy between the Meuse and the Oise and then advance on Paris. On the right, east of the Sambre, the British, Dutch-Belgians and Hanoverians under Wellington were to secure Maubeuge and Avesnes. From the Lower Rhine the Prussians under Gneisenau were to advance on Chimay and Rocroy. From the Upper Rhine the contingents of Bavaria, Baden and Wurtemberg, and the Austrians under Schwarzenberg, were to take Sedan, Stenay and Dun, observe Longwy, Thionville and Metz, and then cross the Meuse. The Russians in reserve were to bring 200,000 men to Wurzburg. But this plan was subsequently modified, and Wellington's proposal to Schwarzenberg on May 9 postulated the arrival of three armies each of 150,000 men. The left wing was to cross the Rhine, march into the Champagne about Langres and observe the fortresses of Alsace. The centre was to cross the Meuse, seize Sedan and observe Thionville and Metz. The right was to besiege Maubeuge and Givet, moving up the Meuse to support the centre. The left wing was to lead and after gaining Langres to advance on both banks of the Marne; afterwards the centre and right would move upon the Aisne. But two days later Wellington describes the situation as being "neither at war nor at peace," for Prussia's political action was producing some disgust; and he reminded Louis—*anxious to be reinstated at Paris*—that the operations would be slow, since to invade France before all the armies were deployed would be hazardous in presence of Napoleon, and that the



invaders must live on the country. Wellington now invited Spain and Portugal to send contingents to the Netherlands to fight under their old leaders, but the rehabilitated rulers of these countries discovered reasons for withholding their aid. The Duke's orders for forming the inundations, at a moment when Napoleon "from the intelligence received" was expected to attack the Netherlands, provoked an outcry from the inhabitants of villages on the Yperlee, and on May 30 the English general was taking measures to pacify the people and meet the "crotchets" of the King's advisers. Indeed, the only matters for congratulation were that Wellington and Blücher were "so well united and so strong" that Napoleon could not do them much mischief, and that Murat had been expelled from Italy.

Of the details of Napoleon's administration during the hundred days we know little, for the story of 1815 is to the mind of all historians the story of the events of June 15-18, and consists of the incidents of the battlefield, of the exploits of troops and the conduct of their leaders. Of the methods and means by which these conflicts were brought about, of the unremitting toil of nearly three months, we are not apprised. Napoleon's daring stroke with a thousand of his guards to capture a nation of thirty millions had seemingly proved successful, and he had now only to hold what he had seized. Massena became Governor of Paris and commander of the National Guard. Soult, who had been War Minister to Louis and had like Ney prepared to take the field on the King's behalf, was induced to throw in his lot with the Emperor. Suchet also was won over. Napoleon made Davout his Minister of War and this prince of martinets set about reorganising the army. Like Soult and Ney, Suchet and Napoleon, he was in his forty-fifth year. Grouchy, who was somewhat older, marched to disperse the bands of royalists led by the Duc d'Angoulême in the vicinity of Lyons and captured the duke early in April, but Napoleon released him and gratified Grouchy with a marshal's baton. Brune, experienced in guerilla warfare, with whom the

Emperor had quarrelled many years ago, was now appointed to command in the south (Midi): he was to observe the Austrians and Sardinians and to keep in order Marshal Perignon, who lived at Toulouse and exerted himself to organise local opposition to Napoleon. The Mayor of Bordeaux with the National Guards defended the Dordogne for the King against Clauzel when the regular troops fell away to join the tricolour. Provence remained royalist and Marshal Brune ultimately fell a victim to the ferocity of its inhabitants. Suchet was sent to Lyons to organise a corps to cover the Alps.

Of the old marshals, therefore, only Ney and Soult remained available for operations against the allies, since St. Cyr, Macdonald, Oudinot, Lefebvre, Augereau, Marmont, Jourdan, Kellermann the elder, Berthier, Bernadotte, Perignon and Victor failed to respond to the call of him who had built up their fortunes. Kellermann, the hero of Valmy, alone had a valid excuse—he was in his eightieth year. Serurier was seventy-three and like Massena, Moncey and Mortier proved unfit for field service. Carnot, the organiser of victory under the republic, now became a staunch supporter of Napoleon, who made him Minister of the Interior and created him a count for his stalwart defence of Antwerp in 1814. The months of April and May were busy times for the home-coming Emperor, and even so late as the first week in June reports were being delivered to him as to the state of his strong places in the north—*e.g.* Thionville and Longwy; Peronne, Ham, St. Quentin, Amiens, Abbeville, and St. Valery, behind the Somme; Dunkerque, Gravelines, Calais, St. Omer, and Aire; and in many, perhaps half, of these reports one may read: "*L'esprit y est bien mauvais.*" But although Napoleon may have been disliked, Louis was not loved. No party would support him steadily and the most able and active of his subjects were against him. He was only a *de jure* sovereign, as Lord Liverpool called him. But Napoleon paid little heed to the ill-humour of the populace; he ruled strongly if he did not rule well, and an insurrection which gathered head in the Vendée

department he quelled with a division of the guard. He contrived to balance Bourbons against Bonapartists and Jacobins against Republicans while preparing to take the field against the allies whose aggressive intentions were obvious.

The organised army of France which Napoleon found awaiting him consisted, if Wellington's report in January can be trusted, of 105 infantry regiments (75 line, 30 light infantry) each consisting of 3 service and 1 dépôt battalions. The battalion was formed of 6 companies of 120 N.C.O.'s and men, and a regiment thus yielded 2160 combatants besides dépôt troops. The cavalry numbered 30,000 to 40,000, and when 20,000 artillerymen and engineers are added to 226,800 infantry an establishment of 280,000 regulars is shown, including the conscripts of 1814 and the returned prisoners of war. But Louis had never been able to collect all these men even by employing the *gendarmerie*, while hundreds of veteran officers on being superseded by the emigrants had gone to join Murat in Italy who maintained a Neapolitan army of 70,000 men. Wellington's view of the situation was entirely erroneous when he prophesied, on hearing of Napoleon's landing in France, that Louis would destroy him "without difficulty and in a short time." The people's reception of the Emperor put the allies in a quandary, and at the end of March they hesitated to depose a monarch who apparently reigned in France by the consent of the nation: they pretended that their solemn declaration in which Napoleon was described as beyond the pale had been merely a device to give "moral support" to the Bourbon King.

It needed now a nice combination of circumstances to preserve the coalition: firstly, acceptance by Louis of responsibility for the act of invasion; secondly, a genuine belief that the French army—there were now some 700,000 men in France who had borne arms—would swarm into the territories recently parcelled out among the allies; thirdly, England's willingness to subsidise each of the confederates. Failing any one of these conditions Napoleon had little cause to fear that the

personal animosity of the legitimate sovereigns grounded in a caste feeling would be indulged at the cost of war; for "chaque jour ajoute dans une proportion effrayante aux forces de Napoleon" was the substance of a spy's report to Wellington in the middle of May. Yet it appears that the allies were already in a political sense the aggressors; but hoping soon to be able to take the offensive in a strategical sense by invading France from the north and the east the forces assembled in the Netherlands were content meanwhile to act defensively.

Napoleon's attempt to purchase peace had been unsuccessful, and when diplomacy failed him as a ruler two alternatives presented themselves to him as a soldier—namely, to march immediately against the enemy or await his coming. The only part of the hostile forces within reach was the Blücher-Wellington combination in Belgium and therefore a decision to take the initiative would involve operations northwards, but of course he might decide otherwise. He might have withdrawn his army before the advance of the allies and manœuvred for an opportunity to assail their communications, or offer battle in a position in front of Paris; and the period of waiting could be utilised to put the capital and other principal towns in a condition to sustain a siege. But any defensive plans were necessarily coupled with delay and to the mind of Napoleon this was a fatal objection. His temperament forbade him to await his enemy in the gate and, moreover, such a method of waging war was obnoxious to the army he commanded. Wellington had long ago detected this weakness in the French and expressed it in saying: "Napoleon never had patience enough to fight a defensive war." By a process of elimination, therefore, we arrive at the plan which Napoleon might be expected to adopt, namely, to invade Belgium immediately and drive the royalties out of the country, making the palace of Laecken again his headquarters—it was from here that he had started for the campaign in Russia; and in thus basing his operations on Belgium he would cut Wellington from his

supply ships and from his magazines at Ostend and Antwerp. The people of Belgium would have welcomed Napoleon as their deliverer from the new Dutch Protestant King, and so finely balanced was the political situation at this time that the seizure of Brussels by Napoleon would have been the signal for defection among the allies; for already desertions to the French had taken place from Belgium, the Austrians and Bavarians were still at loggerheads about the fortress of Salzburg, the Saxon troops had mutinied at Liège and Bernadotte would have gladly found excuse to transfer his Swedish contingent from the allies to Napoleon. Wellington was governed by these considerations in his choice of ground and distribution of forces. He felt that a successful invasion of the Netherlands must be prevented at all hazards, and he therefore took every precaution possible in a friendly country—whose inhabitants would of course resent military interference with property rights and local interests—to obstruct French progress west of the Scheldt, where the road lay open to Ostend and Antwerp.

He distributed his polyglot army west of the Sambre on the line Tournay-Ath-Mons-Nivelles, so covering Brussels on the south. Beyond this point eastward, however, Wellington was compelled to rely upon his colleague, Marshal Blücher, who had undertaken to prolong the defensive line to the left through Charleroi, Namur and Huy to Liège. It is a matter of no little delicacy to offer advice to an ally, and Wellington could do no more than suggest to Blücher the patrolling of the Upper Sambre and the Meuse towards Beaumont, Philipville, Givet and Dinant. For a similar reason Wellington could not dictate the precise measures to be adopted by the Prince of Orange, who nominally a corps commander was operating with his future subjects within his father's territory; and if Prince William should think fit to leave his headquarters and pay visits to Brussels it was hardly feasible to restrain him. Then we must remember that in times of incessant war generals become singularly immune from nerves; their

freedom from anxiety often savours of slackness—the strain of such personal reconnaissance as we advocate to-day would have worn them out; and it was their habit to adopt certain measures of security without expecting them to be wholly successful when opposed by an equally experienced general. It would hardly have occurred, for example, to Wellington or Blücher that either could penetrate Napoleon's plans sufficiently to prevent a local surprise, and therefore a sudden attack would cause them little perturbation but rather give rise to a suspicion that the inrush portended a more serious blow at some other point. But two things are clear, namely, that Wellington's plan for "un grand mouvement concentrique" was acceptable to his colleagues and that the means for such an enterprise were ample: it was agreed, too, that in order to run no risks "on attend que l'ensemble des forces soit à la disposition des généraux."

For the means as regards personnel it should be understood that in 1815 the total British land forces for all purposes were 393,697, but of these 134,518 were militia or volunteers who could not serve abroad and 12,066 were native troops in the Colonies. India absorbed 23,104 and the Colonies 93,338, so that our home army of regulars, then as now the only force available for intervention in European affairs, numbered only 130,671. Austria had 307,000 and Russia 621,000 soldiers; the total forces of Germany, including Prussia, were perhaps 254,350.<sup>1</sup> To oppose this multitude Napoleon could count upon 513,740 men by including the National Guard, and he proceeded to organise his army for the campaign into two wings and a reserve. Under Marshal Ney were 45,000 to 50,000 men, viz.:

- (a) D'Erlon's and Reille's corps (8 divisions).
- (b) Light cavalry, 2 divisions (Jacquinot and Pire).
- (c) Kellermann's cavalry corps (Heritier and Roussel).

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<sup>1</sup> Figures for 1806: no later estimate available.



Under Marshal Grouchy were 45,000 to 50,000 men, viz. :

- (a) Vandamme's and Gerard's corps (6 divisions).
  - (b) Light cavalry, 2 divisions (Domont and Morin).
  - (c) Pajol's cavalry corps (Soult and Subervie).
- Excelman's cavalry corps (Strolz and Chasel).

The Emperor retained as a reserve :

- (a) Count Lobau's corps (3 divisions).
- (b) The Guard corps (6 divisions and 2 cavalry divisions).
- (c) Milhaud's cavalry corps (Wathier and Delort).

Wellington early in April had organised the forces then placed under his control into brigades and divisions, and in relieving the young Prince of Orange of the supreme command had appointed him a corps commander of equal standing with the famous Peninsular general, Lord Hill. The Anglo-Hanoverian troops were treated as British and so were distinguished from the Dutch-Belgians called *Netherlanders*. The Prince had two divisions (1 and 3) of British troops and two of *Netherlanders* besides a *Netherland* cavalry division under his command as the 1st Corps. Lord Hill controlled a similar force of two divisions (2 and 4), one brigade of cavalry, one *Netherland* division and one Dutch-Indian brigade: he was assisted by Prince Frederick of Orange. Wellington had already garrisoned Mons, Tournay, Ypres, Ostend, Nieuport and Antwerp with 13,400 men. He met Blücher at Tirlemont on May 3 and heard of the mutiny of a corps of Saxons at Liège who were straightway sent off as prisoners to Prussia.

At this interview, no doubt, it was settled in what way the two generals should co-operate, for the subject had been already mooted by Wellington in the course of a correspondence in which he advised the Prussian commander to march up the Meuse and occupy cantonments between Charleroi, Namur, and Huy. He pointed out the political advantage to Napoleon of immediate military success which should drive Louis and the King of the Netherlands from Belgium, and exhorted the Prussians to prevent a *coup de main* on his



left. The Duke had just then been led to expect invasion either between the Lys and the Scheldt or between the Scheldt and the Sambre. Napoleon had evidently directed some menacing movements northwards from Lille, Valenciennes and Maubeuge; and as it is the habit of invading armies to make demonstrations at many points in order to deceive an opponent the Duke gave orders that, if the enemy should advance from Lille, Lord Hill's 4th division was to fall back from Courtray to Audenarde, destroying the bridge over the Scheldt at Avelghem and inundating the country behind them. The garrison of Ghent was also to flood the country. The cavalry then in observation west of the Lys from Menin to Furnes was to retire on Ostend, and that which guarded the region between the Scheldt and the Lys was to retire on Tournay. The other three British divisions and the cavalry brigades were to concentrate at their several headquarters and be held ready to march at a moment's notice. The Netherland troops were to be collected behind Mons at Soignies and Nivelles. In case the attack should come from Valenciennes and Maubeuge, between the Scheldt and the Sambre, the British were to collect at Enghien and the Netherlanders at Soignies and Braine le Comte, behind the fortresses of Tournay and Mons; the garrison of Ath was to be withdrawn; and three brigades of cavalry were to march to Hal.

It will be noticed that these orders involved a dislocation of the corps organisation and practically redistributed the units into groups as British and Netherlanders. As events turned out, however, no occasion arose to act on any of these instructions and matters remained *in statu quo* for six weeks; but the proposed dispositions clearly show why a French attack delivered east of the Sambre would outflank all the defences on which Wellington relied. Such an attack is what Napoleon planned in the middle of June and accordingly D'Erlon at Valenciennes, the Imperial Guard at Compiègne, Reille at Avesnes, Vandamme at Rocroi, Gerard at Metz, Lobau at Laon and the cavalry

commanders Pajol, Exelmans, Kellermann and Milhaud—whose corps were echeloned from Laon to Avesnes—all received orders to move towards Charleroi on the Sambre and prepare to cross the river before noon on Thursday, June 15. Napoleon himself remained in Paris, as his custom was, until all was ready for immediate operations; and then he came to Beaumont. Charleroi was held by a Prussian corps under Zieten which, like Thielman's corps at Ciney, was supported by Pirch's corps at Namur. The 4th Corps under Bülow had not yet moved beyond Liège. Zieten's covering troops of course gave way before the French advance and took the road towards Fleurus after much skirmishing and the loss of a few hundred men. Reille and D'Erlon crossed the Sambre at Marchiennes; the other commanders crossed at Charleroi, except Gerard whose march from Metz had been delayed and to whom a crossing on the right at Chatelet was now assigned. A divisional general, Bourmont, took the opportunity to desert to the Prussians with his staff—an untoward event in its influence upon his troops—and Napoleon early in the evening complained of fatigue, which gave his old associates matter for serious reflection.

Yet so far things had prospered on the French side and the Emperor had already prepared a proclamation "to the people of Belgium and the inhabitants of the left bank of the Rhine" which was dated by anticipation from his palace of Laeken, north of Brussels, and ran: "Napoleon is among you: you are worthy to be Frenchmen: join my invincible phalanxes." Marshal Ney, who had only been summoned on June 11 from private life, arrived upon the field in the afternoon and was placed at once in command of the left wing. Meanwhile at Wellington's headquarters all was quiet. In spite of—perhaps in consequence of—the many alarms given during the preceding two months the Duke in mid-June was somewhat heedless of Napoleon, but intent on the measures for his "grand mouvement concentrique," as his letters of this date to the Czar, the Austrian ambassador and the Duc d'Orleans clearly

show. His quartermaster-general, Colonel De Lancey, had just brought his young wife to Brussels, believing they would remain there a month at least, and attended his office for only an hour a day, all military business being at a standstill.

Not until June 14 was any news received to disturb this routine and De Lancey was dining at the Spanish ambassador's when the thunderbolt fell next day in the shape of a report that the French had attacked the Prussians. Then, indeed, there was "mounting in hot haste," and such officers as were not at the Duchess of Richmond's dance were busy the livelong night collecting troops from their billets in various villages and preparing them to march. By 9 P.M. the preliminary orders, and by midnight the after-orders, had been dispatched to distant towns by orderly hussars. The Duke and General Muffling were still at the ball when the *réveillé* was sounded. The original orders had collected Wellington's army as follows :—

1. South of Brussels; at Ath, Braine le Comte, Nivelles.
2. West of Brussels; at Audenarde, Sottegham, Grammont, Ninove.
3. North of Brussels; at Alost, Vilvorde, Louvain road.

Later orders concentrated the forces on the line Enghien-Braine le Comte-Nivelles and on the morrow the line was to be extended eastward to Quatre Bras.

### III

THE situation brought about by Napoleon on June 15 is one which is familiar to students of war. Blücher and Wellington had been waiting three months for the coming of their colleagues and had during that period dispersed their forces in billets along the Netherlands frontier, thus distributing the burden of supply for men and horses, while watching the approaches from France, gathering information of the enemy and strengthening the points which might become the immediate objects of attack. During this period news from France came in daily from a great variety of sources—elaborate strategical memoirs from the famous general Dumouriez, copies of army “states” from the late Minister of War, General Clarke (Duc de Felte), letters from secret-service agents in Paris; and at the outposts were collected the gossip of peasants and deserters and the reports of patrols and local spies.

Every conceivable plan had been fathered upon Napoleon, “wolf” was cried so often that no doubt a certain degree of apathy supervened, and as the reports often contradicted each other they probably ceased to be read. Our cavalry commander at Mons, General Dornberg, in May and June was procuring the Paris journals regularly and had agents in Laon, Valenciennes, Maubeuge and Chimay: he even obtained secretly from French officers news as to the movements of French troops. But all this intelligence could not be verified, and moreover the art of drawing correct inferences from military data is not an easy one. Napoleon was well aware that the plethora of informa-

tion obtained by the allies from all quarters would tend to confuse rather than enlighten them, and that as long as the Austrians and Russians remained east of the Rhine he could choose his own time and place to attack the forces billeted between the Meuse and the North Sea. We have learnt so much about Napoleon during the past century that probably his mind is better known to us than it was known to his contemporaries, and the key of his strategical plan is more likely to be found by regarding his operations as illustrative of his professed principles of war than by heeding the guesses of his staff as to his ultimate intentions.

Now, it was one of his maxims that "when the conquest of a country is undertaken by two or three armies, which have each their separate line of operation until they arrive at a point fixed upon for their concentration, a junction should never be attempted near the enemy who by uniting his forces may not only prevent it but beat the armies in detail." And since the allies had resolved to deploy in the northeast of France and had prematurely assembled their right wing on the French frontier we may reasonably surmise that Napoleon intended to destroy this wing before the supporting armies could arrive. Moreover, since the right wing of the allies was itself a composite force under commanders of different nations the same principle would apply as regards the point fixed upon for the concentration of the forces of Blücher and Wellington. The Emperor had apparently discovered that by crossing the Sambre about Thuin he would drive a wedge in between Wellington's post at Mons and Blücher's post at Charleroi and he trusted that the breach would afterwards widen automatically.

Another favourite maxim was: "The strength of an army like the power in mechanics is estimated by multiplying the mass by the velocity: a rapid march augments the moral of an army and increases all the chances of victory," and this principle could be exemplified by a forced march to Brussels while Blücher and Wellington were attempting a concentration. Again:

"Nothing is so important in war as an undivided command, and for this reason when war is carried on against a single power there should be only one army acting upon one base and conducted by one chief." Napoleon rightly conceived that the allies by their neglect of this principle might be destroyed piecemeal. We need hardly do more than digest these well-worn rules of war to understand the nature of the operation on June 15 which startled Wellington out of his habitual *insouciance* and caused him that evening to issue orders for a concentration of his divisions although still in doubt as to the exact point of danger: he did not even know whether Nivelles had been attacked during the day.

To say that the allies in Belgium were strategically surprised is only to credit Napoleon with his ordinary ability in dealing with a very common situation. He had of course broken through the cordon at the point where he struck in force, and his choice of a point of attack actually coincided with the right of the Prussian and the left of Wellington's army: what is more remarkable is that he had caught the Duke napping in his distant cantonments. It remained to be seen whether Napoleonic vigour coupled with unity of command would produce the anticipated effects upon the divided command and dilatory action of Blücher and Wellington. The extraordinary delay in communicating to Wellington important news on June 15 and the reluctance of the Duke to believe that the Courtray-Tournay line was not affected promised excellent results from the French point of view. The material damage done by Napoleon to the allies on June 15 was, however, slight for the reason that it is difficult to hit a moving target or a target but partly exposed. Zieten's outposts retired on the main body after giving the alarm, and his corps quitted Charleroi and moved back to Fleurus followed by Napoleon's advanced guard of the right wing. Similarly on the left the advanced guard of the left wing pushed back the Netherlands—the brigades of Bylandt and Saxe-Weimar with one battery



of Perponcher's Division had been aligned with Zieten's outposts—who retired along the Brussels road as far as Frasnès. But the moral advantage gained by Napoleon on the first day was very considerable. He had re-established his personal ascendancy over his new French army; he had shown that he still possessed the Napoleon "touch"; and the mere fact of his crossing the frontier filled with alarm or delight according to their political sentiments the inhabitants of the Netherlands.

English visitors to Brussels were acutely sensible of the change in public feeling. "The Prussians are brave, hardy and inveterate enemies of France, but there is a considerable proportion of them only militia. The British contingent, I have been told, does not exceed 33,000. The Hanoverians are very young men and their officers many of them mere children. The Dutch are good soldiers—so are the Belgians—but they have served one or more campaigns under Napoleon. The French troops are all veterans, men of desperate character who will undertake the most daring and hazardous enterprises: to them danger has long been familiar, robbery and plunder their daily occupation." Such was the fair estimate of a war-ridden inhabitant, friendly to the allies, of the fighting value of the forces about to engage. In pursuance of orders Picton's Division, which had been quartered in Brussels and during the afternoon and evening of June 15 had been disturbed by rumours of the French advance, assembled at midnight in the public park and three hours later marched out of the city by the Namur Gate followed by the Black Brunswickers. In columns of companies the infantry marched for many hours along the broad paved causeway through the Forest of Soignies to Waterloo where they bivouacked; at 11 A.M. they proceeded on past Mont St. Jean to Genappe; and here another halt was made till 1 P.M. at which hour they marched to the sound of the cannon at Quatre Bras, where the Nivelles-Ligny road intersects the Brussels-Charleroi highway; and where they found part of the



Prince of Orange's corps engaged with the enemy. Wellington, riding at speed, had passed the column at 9 A.M. and had gone far beyond Quatre Bras—even to Ligny to confer with Blücher—a journey of forty-three miles between the ball and the battle at the age of forty-six! Picton had brought with him Kempt's Brigade, Pack's Brigade and Vinck's Hanoverian Brigade, the Brunswick Infantry, Brunswick Cavalry and two batteries. The fighting at Quatre Bras had begun at 2.30 P.M. and it lasted till 9 P.M. The village and farm on the high road was the centre of the position; on the right was the wood of Bossu. The enemy's advance was screened by crops of wheat and rye. Our guns were on the high road and in a field in front of the village, within 400-600 yards of the French artillery. Perponcher's Division of Netherlanders and the Brunswick Infantry held the wood on the right, and were subsequently reinforced by our Guard Brigade which here lost 425 men. The Brunswick Cavalry was bravely led by the royal duke against the French Cuirassiers until he fell mortally wounded—his father had fallen at Jena nine years before. The French cavalry were checked by the musketry fire of deployed infantry or by the impenetrable square formation, but proved effective against pursuing troops in loose array.

By 6 P.M. the Prince of Orange had brought up the 3rd Division under Sir Charles Alten (Halkett's Brigade, Ompteda's German Brigade, Kielmansegge's Hanoverian Brigade and two batteries) and also part of the 1st Division, namely, Maitland's Brigade of Guards. Alten's Division as it arrived from Nivelles was placed on the extreme left and suffered from the French guns emplaced on the high ground at Frasnes—its four British regiments lost 368 men. At 7 P.M. the French made a fresh attempt to capture the farm and secured a house with garden and hedge, but a counter attack expelled them after hand-to-hand fighting. Here Picton's Division lost in Pack's Brigade 930 and in Kempt's Brigade 639 men. Lloyd's Battery lost so many horses that two of its guns could not be moved

until the battle was ended. The foreign troops endured similar losses and if the French left wing under Marshal Ney had on June 16 begun its attack early in the day it is to be feared that Wellington would have been unable to bivouac his 1st Corps behind the village that night, nor would he himself have slept in security at Genappe. At the close of the battle Picton's Division occupied the plain in front of the village; on its left was Alten's Division and on its right were the Guard Brigade and the foreign troops. Our light cavalry began to arrive soon after the last gun was fired. Grant's Brigade of hussars had set out at 7 A.M.—two hours after receiving orders—and moved through Grammont to Enghien. Halting here only thirty minutes to feed the horses it marched on to Braine le Comte and found all the roads filled with troops moving towards the scene of action. At 10 P.M. it reached Nivelles and thence pushing on through groups of wounded reached Quatre Bras at midnight, so coming to an end of its journey of fifty miles. Marshal Ney had been the victim of untoward circumstances on Friday: half a dozen messages of considerable length and ambiguity from Soult as chief of staff and from Napoleon himself had reached, puzzled and annoyed him. He was ordered to destroy the enemy at Quatre Bras by using the infantry corps of D'Erlon and Reille and the cavalry corps of Kellermann (3000 *cuirassiers d'élite*), but at 2 P.M. was given the additional task of aiding the Emperor's operations near Ligny; and an hour later the latter task proved to be the principal one, for he was told that "le sort de la France est entre vos mains."

Napoleon had not foreseen that by postponing action at Quatre Bras he would enable Wellington to reinforce this point and fully occupy Ney's command for six hours; neither had he considered that Ney's command would be deprived of D'Erlon's Corps and that in consequence Ney's mission—a harder one than was anticipated—would have to be carried out with only half the force allotted to him. On the other hand it should be remembered that there is a vast difference

between attack and defence in regard to the force to be employed, and that if Ney had been endowed with a larger share of military insight Soult's message written at 3 P.M.—“*Ainsi n'hésitez pas un instant pour faire le mouvement que l'Empereur vous ordonne*”—would have caused him to convert his abortive attack into a delaying action and under cover of this demonstration to have stolen away with every man, horse and gun he could spare in order to co-operate with the Emperor at Ligny, where “*l'ennemi est pris en flagrant délit au moment où il cherche à se réunir aux Anglais.*” The order was imperative, the cry beseeching and Ney would have acted gloriously by hastening to the decisive point at whatever cost to the covering troops left behind. Meanwhile Napoleon as will be gathered from his messages to Ney had attacked Blücher's army at Ligny, a similar point to Quatre Bras seven miles further east on the Nivelles-Namur road. Blücher was holding a line of villages with two corps until noon when Thielman's (3rd) Corps arrived. There was desperate fighting from noon till 9 P.M. and Blücher, himself a sabreur of seventy-two, led the last cavalry charge of the Prussians and was unhorsed and left for dead. The right wing and reserve of the French army having driven the Prussians off the road rested that night south of Bry and Sombref while the Emperor slept at Fleurus.

Napoleon had won another tactical victory without a doubt, but it was not a decisive one; for when the losses are about equal and the enemy can utilise the hours of darkness to escape from the toils he will recuperate at leisure or renew the combat on more favourable ground. The question of first importance to Napoleon now was whether this indecisive action could be turned, as even defeats are sometimes turned, into a strategic victory. The object of the day's operations from the French point of view was to prevent the junction of the armies of Wellington and Blücher and no tactical success could compensate for failure in attaining that object. The Prussians had retired, but

whither? north, east or west? If to the west certainly, and if to the north probably, they would unite with Wellington who remained at Quatre Bras with his communications open. General Buonaparte of the French republican army would never have taken rest nor allowed rest to others until all doubt upon such a vital matter had been removed. Even the Emperor Napoleon of ten years ago would have hunted down the retreating Prussians and broken Blücher's army to pieces. But in 1815 there was something of evil omen in Napoleon's military attitude which struck every one about him. It had been manifested in his fear to employ Murat at the head of his cavalry, in his tardy summons to Ney, in his tenderness for his troops, and now it was shown in his seeming indifference to gathering up the fruits of victory. It may perhaps be all summed up in his own words: "I no longer felt my former confidence. . . . I felt something was wanting within me." But the phenomenon has the effect of diminishing interest in a campaign of which, after all, Napoleon is the central figure, the main attraction. To a soldier the vagaries of a master of war are a sorry spectacle; to a reader of history, seized with the natural desire to see things duly accounted for and to learn the reason why, the story of Waterloo remains an enigma. While Napoleon slept a British staff officer with a couple of squadrons found his way from Quatre Bras to Sombref, where he discovered Zieten's corps and learnt of Blücher's defeat. He returned to Wellington with the news and in the morning again established communication with the Prussians, so that Wellington by 9 A.M. on Saturday knew that Zieten was only five miles away on his left at Tilly and that Blücher's intention was to retire down the valley of the Dyle towards Wavre—only ten miles east of the village of Waterloo.

But these matters were hidden from Napoleon. Wellington was allowed to carry out his plans on Saturday without molestation by the French except when the mounted patrols and their supports came into

collision. The Duke directed Lambert's Brigade which had just landed to advance by forced marches; he evacuated Nivelles and sent the troops back to Waterloo; he issued his orders for retreat from Quatre Bras at 10 A.M. while Napoleon gossiped at Ligny and Ney in sullen mood stood where twenty-four hours ago he had received orders to march forthwith on Brussels. The British commander actually indulged in a siesta until the unwonted quiet in his front induced him to reconnoitre with his telescope and thus about 2 P.M. to descry some French columns at Ligny beginning to move towards the left wing; only then our rearguard moved off. Napoleon and his staff presently joined the French advanced guard and riding forward with the cavalry and horse artillery the Emperor came under fire from the guns which accompanied Sir H. Vivian's Brigade of hussars. Passing by Genappe a part of our light cavalry, entangled in a defile, became engaged with the French lancers so that Lord Uxbridge was forced to beg assistance, which Wellington gave by coming back himself with some heavy cavalry to check the French horsemen. The Duke then carried off Lord Uxbridge to dinner, scolding him somewhat for pitting hussars against lancers. This affair has been magnified into a hot pursuit—"like a steeplechase" says a French writer. In truth a deluge of rain converted the arable land and cornfields into swamps and the retreating army cut up the ground for the pursuers. Near Mont St. Jean where the march was to end Picton emplaced his divisional artillery and shelled the French advanced guard and two French batteries of horse artillery; but Wellington stopped the cannonade on our side and placed his troops in bivouac for the night.

Meanwhile the Duke had sent a message to Blücher at Wavre, which reached him at noon, and he had warned his friends in Brussels to be ready to leave for Antwerp at a moment's notice. His action in regard to the Netherlands who had quitted the field on Friday to spread alarm in Brussels is not known, but he had already determined to avoid that city in

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the event of his having to retreat again. The Duke always stated that one of his objects in leaving Lord Hill's Corps about Hal and Enghien was that he would retreat, if retreat became necessary, towards his shipping and resources at Ostend, operating by his right where Hill was stationed; but his intention in the event of his being "turned by Hal," a prospect always before him, is not at all clear. The truth is that Wellington was a general who habitually took very short views, and while no doubt he would have improvised some plan to deal adequately with any actual situation we question whether his afterthoughts in later life, in answer to criticism of his actions or to conundrums propounded by his friends, should now be taken seriously. "Plans?" said he to Lord Uxbridge, who was to assume command if Wellington had become a casualty and therefore had a right to inquire, "I have no plans. I shall be guided by circumstances." The Prussians seem to have been even more fortunate than their allies on Saturday in their movement to Wavre, which had commenced overnight by order of Gneisenau who assumed command while Blücher, miraculously discovered among the fallen, was being medically treated at the village of Mellery. Zieten and Pirch had moved back to Mellery, Tilly and Gentinnes after Friday's battle at Ligny, while Thielman remained upon the field until 3 A.M. and then began his retreat to Gembloux. Zieten reached Wavre at noon on Saturday and crossed the Dyle. Pirch remained on the right bank of the river, two miles from the town.

Thielman reached Gembloux at 6 A.M. and while seeking a road clear of the debris of the two corps ahead of him ascertained that Bülow's corps, which had been delayed on Friday on its march from Liège, was now only three miles distant. At 9.30 A.M. orders from Blücher arrived which directed Thielman to proceed to Wavre. Bülow was to move on Dion-le-Mont, posting a division as rearguard at Vieux Sart and furnishing another covering detachment at Mont St. Guibert. Thielman reached La Bavette one mile north



of Wavre at 8 P.M. and Bülow's troops were in position at 10.30 P.M. All these movements were completed by the Prussians without molestation and to learn the reason we must return to Ligny, where we shall find Napoleon on Saturday at 10 A.M. inspecting his troops in their bivouacs and discussing political affairs with his entourage. Before leaving his quarters at Fleurus the Emperor had written to Ney giving directions about his wounded and the supply of ammunition. At 11 A.M. he heard that Wellington was still in possession of Quatre Bras and then he resolved to support Ney with the reserve, after giving one of Lobau's Divisions to Grouchy in lieu of Morin's Cavalry now withdrawn from the right wing with which Grouchy was to proceed to Gembloux, reconnoitre towards Namur and Maestricht and report to headquarters by the Namur-Quatre Bras road. Namur in the event of its being unoccupied by the Prussians was to be garrisoned by National Guards drawn from Charlemont. The message concluded :

"Il est important de pénétrer ce que l'ennemi veut faire ; ou il se séparé des Anglais ou ils veulent se réunir encore pour couvrir Bruxelles et Liège en tentant le sort d'une nouvelle bataille."

Grouchy did his best to carry out these instructions according to his lights. He occupied Gembloux, where he found part of the Prussian baggage. He deduced from the reports of his cavalry that the Prussians were in two bodies, the one marching northwards to Sart à Walhain and the other eastwards to Perwes. He promised to send cavalry to both places "ce soir" and to follow the route taken by the largest of the two bodies ; but apparently he deemed no further advance necessary until the morrow.

In short, Saturday was a day cut to waste by the French Emperor, and it was by this day's work that history has judged him as a military commander in 1815. Grouchy did not again report until 11 A.M. on Sunday when he was at Sart à Walhain and promised to concentrate at Wavre "ce soir" ; but meanwhile



Blücher had written to Wellington to say that Bülow would move at daybreak by Saint Lambert to attack the French right at Mont St. Jean and that Bülow would be supported by Thielman. Wellington was in possession of this comforting assurance early on Sunday.

The eve of Waterloo was a span of widespread misery, though the bivouacs of Wellington's army were within nine miles of a populous city and no strain had yet been put upon the commissariat. The administrative arrangements of the army were as complete as "orders" could make them. Tents had been issued to each unit and a waggon to convey them; the divisions carried four days' supply of biscuit and every night the next day's meat was to be cooked ready for issue in the morning; each company had its own camp kettles; stores of forage, corn, wood, meat, bread, and wine or spirits were in the hands of the commissaries; the men possessed blankets though their greatcoats had been dispatched to Ostend early in the month. Yet a surgeon in Grant's Cavalry Brigade says that on Saturday night "officers, men, and horses were completely done up with the long march of the day before and the continuous moving on this day, having very little to eat during the whole time. We were up to our knees in mud and stinking water, but not a drop of drinking water or a particle of food was to be found in the villages. It was all mud, but we got some straw and boughs of trees and made a rough shelter against the torrents of rain which fell all night. Wrapping our cloaks round us, and huddling close together, we lay in the mud and wooed the drowsy god." But many unfortunate troopers were reduced to standing by their horses all night. "We cloaked, throwing a part over the saddle, holding by the stirrup-leather to steady us if sleepy."

An infantry subaltern in Picton's Division tells a still more doleful tale. "When we took up our ground on the position of Waterloo on the night of June 17 not one of us had a dry stitch on our backs and our baggage was no one knew where. There was no drink-

ing water nearer than Waterloo village; and here the draw-wells had no ropes, and when twenty-three canteen straps, buckled together and aided by several fathoms of rope lowered a bucket to the bottom, there was no water." Until eight in the morning his regiment was "seated in pairs on a few small twigs or a little straw, in a newly ploughed field, well soaked with six hours' heavy rain: the men six inches deep in the mud bent their backs to the hurricane without fire or meat or drink and with only a thin blanket for shelter." "It was a night of horror" says Sergeant Cotton of the 7th Hussars. "About nine in the morning the rain ceased and the commissary issued beef to the division, but very few seemed inclined to eat it. From the hind quarter of a bullock I cut a steak which I fastened to a ramrod and held over a fire till it was tolerably warm. Both officers and men looked blue with cold; our long beards and wet and dirty clothing drying upon us were anything but comfortable. Soon an allowance of grog was issued." In the cavalry the men "picked the raw meat from the bones" and got some corn and water for the horses from Hougoumont, where the Guards were posted. "Men and horses were shaking with cold." The infantry contrived at length to light fires and dry their clothes and clean their firearms by discharging them or drawing the charges; and were constructing huts when the bugle sounded the "fall in." Nowadays, when the cooks' vehicle is as much a part of the fighting equipment of a unit as an ammunition cart, when waterproof sheets are carried and an emergency ration is in every soldier's haversack, it is well to remember under what different conditions Wellington's army prepared for its last and greatest conflict.

#### IV

THE story of the marches and combats in June 1815 is perforce somewhat legendary in character, for in those days staff officers did not keep war diaries, the orders given in the field were mainly verbal orders and lengthy reports of actions were not in vogue. Wellington on June 19 in a letter to Earl Bathurst related in a couple of pages all that he thought necessary of the decisive operations; the reports of Blücher and Napoleon are almost as brief; Grouchy's report deals only with the movements of his own detachment. These and Ney's letter to the French Government on June 26, supplementing his speech in reply to Carnot in the Chamber of Peers, and a few field messages which have been preserved constitute the whole of the evidence given on the spot by the principal actors.

Upon this slender foundation, however, a vast literature has been created by piecing together the stray recollections of subordinates in reminiscent mood, coloured by a pardonable egotism and necessarily restricted in outlook where not expanded by the incorporation of hearsay. The glaring discrepancies of such witnesses have naturally given rise to controversies even as to actual occurrences. But whenever an attempt has been made to trace cause and effect, to assign motives for action, to apportion praise and blame or to reconstruct the battle scenes on different tactical theories, that attempt has resulted in a medley of fact and fancy. It is indeed remarkable to what an extent the faculty of observation seems to be in abeyance on the field of

battle: junior officers and even private soldiers who have left accounts of the events in which they took part are silent upon matters which directly concerned them and upon the things that must have occurred before their eyes; the cavalryman upon the care of his principal weapon—the horse; infantry upon the use of the bayonet; the rifleman upon the range of his firearm; the gunner upon the respective uses of case and round shot. Well could we have spared the dissertations of such writers on grand tactics for some description of their regimental arrangements to care for wounded men and horses during an eight hours' battle or the number of rounds fired by a company of infantry or the weight carried by a troop-horse in the charge. If we chance to know the weight of the projectile thrown by that ponderous weapon, "Brown Bess," it is because the Duke himself had noticed this detail and averred that the 1 oz. bullet would break a horse's leg. In short, our knowledge of the minor tactics of the great battle and of the war administration of units at the period is painfully deficient.

"The history of a battle," as Wellington remarked, "is not unlike the history of a ball: some individuals may recollect all the little events of which the great result is the battle won or lost; but no individual can recollect the order in which or the exact moment at which they occurred, which makes all the difference as to their value or importance"; and so that patient investigator, Captain Siborne, whose model of the battlefield of Waterloo may still be seen at the museum in Whitehall, fell under the strictures of the Duke for "having listened to every hero of his own tale." The broad facts of the campaign are these: Napoleon took the initiative while the main body of his enemies was still east of the Rhine: he was encountered but not checked on the Sambre by the Prussians on June 15 while Wellington's force was out of reach: the next day he attacked Wellington at Quatre Bras and Blücher at Ligny, with the result that the allies retired north and west to the line of Wavre-Mont St. Jean: this rear-

ward movement and Napoleon's advance in two columns was the sole event of Saturday, June 17. On Sunday the French attacked at two points twelve miles apart, but Blücher resolutely transferred the bulk of his troops from Wavre to Mont St. Jean where Wellington was holding Napoleon's main body, and this reinforcement coming at the end of the day decided the battle. The Emperor was routed at La Belle Alliance though his detached force at Wavre after fighting till 11 p.m. was prepared to renew its attack on the morrow. Napoleon quitted his army and became a political fugitive ere the French troops could reassemble under Marshal Davout, who held the outworks of Paris against the allies for a fortnight and then by a military convention evacuated the capital and withdrew behind the Loire. Of this three weeks' campaign the *pièce de résistance* was the battle of June 18 and in particular the main action a few miles south of Waterloo village, where in the afternoon Napoleon, Blücher and Wellington met upon the field for the first and only time.

In the village of Waterloo on June 18 an hour before sunrise the Duke sat at his desk to address the Governor of Antwerp, instructing him to flood the ditches of the fortress and regard the city as in a state of siege; to advise the Duc de Berri to remove the French King to Antwerp in the event of Napoleon gaining Brussels by a flank movement through Hal; and to beg Sir Charles Stuart, our ambassador, to "keep the English quiet if you can: let them all prepare to move, but neither be in a hurry or a fright as all will yet turn out well." The Duke had received overnight Blücher's message: "I shall come; not with two corps only, but with my whole army." At daylight Wellington's detached force of 17,500 men, namely, the 4th Division under General Colville (less Mitchell's Brigade) and a corps of Netherlands under Prince Frederick of Orange fell back to Hal, nine miles from headquarters. The main army had bivouacked for the night in front of Waterloo and was taking such rest as the circumstances permitted,

except Lambert's Brigade<sup>1</sup> which was still on the march, having just arrived from North America. Standing at the village of Mont St. Jean, two miles south of Waterloo where the Nivelles-Louvain road crosses the Brussels-Charleroi road,<sup>2</sup> the observer looking south saw on his right front the farm and country-house of Hougoumont on the Nivelles road; in his front on the chaussée was the farm of La Haye Sainte and on his left front the farms of Papelotte and La Haye in the Smohain valley. These buildings were all occupied by detachments to form what are called advanced-posts, and behind them the main army was deployed along an unpaved road which crosses both the chaussée—a short mile south of Mont St. Jean—and the Nivelles-Louvain road just half a mile north of Hougoumont. This cross-road was fenced to the left of the chaussée (eastward) with high and thick hedges; to the right of the chaussée (westward) it passed through a cutting between banks five or six feet high: the road led from the farms of Papelotte and La Haye on the left to Braine l'Alleud village on the right and it coincided with the crest of a long, low ridge: thus our troops facing south overlooked for the most part a depression in the ground, and saw beyond this valley and somewhat above them the plateau on which Napoleon's main army was gathered a mile away.

The ridge on which Wellington deployed his army fell away in rear northwards for a thousand yards, and it was upon this gentle slope that the second line and reserve troops were concealed from view of the enemy and protected from his fire. The flanks of our position commanded open country and could only have been turned by a wide detour: the broken ground in front of the centre was controlled both from the Hougoumont château and from the farm of La Haye Sainte, while

<sup>1</sup> This brigade had marched out of Assche, ten miles north-west of Brussels, on Saturday; it reached the battlefield at 9 A.M. on Sunday, slept till 3 P.M., and then went into action losing over one-third of its strength.

<sup>2</sup> Often called the *chaussée*, or *pavé*, as its surface consisted of blocks of stone.



both château and farm were inconspicuous from the south and therefore little exposed to the French artillery. Our first-line troops obtained some cover behind the hedges and banks of the cross-road, but these banks and hedges had to be pierced at intervals for the passage to the front of our cavalry and artillery. The land was sodden with rain and covered with high crops of rye and wheat until the movements of troops to and fro had beaten down the corn into a sort of swamp. The boundary roads traversing four square miles of undulating country were fenced, when fenced at all, by cuttings. It was a dull day, the air was still, and the smoke from black powder obscured the view as soon as firing commenced. The details of the fighting are not easy to follow except in the case of those troops that remained stationary. Our defence was resolutely passive. Only the cavalry ventured on a sortie against the French during the battle. The higher commanders seem to have moved about from point to point regardless of life and limb. The Prince of Orange was severely wounded, three generals were struck at the Duke's side at different times—De Lancey, the quartermaster-general, who was mortally injured; Lord Fitzroy Somerset, the military secretary, who lost his right arm; and our cavalry commander, the Earl of Uxbridge, who had his leg carried off—and in all ten lieutenant-generals were placed *hors de combat*. The commander-in-chief throughout displayed his constitutional aplomb: the cannon-shot which struck Lord Uxbridge at the end of the day actually passed over the withers of the Duke's horse—"By God, I've lost my leg," cried Uxbridge. "Have you, by God?" was all the Duke's reply.

Compared with Napoleon's *ordre de bataille* Wellington's arrangements were somewhat haphazard, and it is fortunate for his reputation that the motley collection of troops he had raked together at the last moment was not called upon to deliver an attack. The corps organisation had been tacitly abandoned and the divisional commands were now shorn of their artillery. Our cavalry had been formed into seven brigades under



the Earl of Uxbridge; who, however, had little control over the Netherland cavalry brigades of Tripp, Ghigny and Van Merle; nor over the Brunswick Horse, which remained idle, nor the Cumberland Hussars who ran away to Brussels. The infantry divisions were composed partly of British brigades, partly of German<sup>1</sup> brigades and partly of the newly-raised Hanoverian brigades—the Guard division only excepted. The Dutch-Belgian divisions of Chasse and Perponcher, the division of Brunswickers and the brigade of Nassau Infantry formed independent commands.

Wellington's army was in fact an integer composed of brigades and batteries under the direct command of the Duke himself, and indeed the more picturesque incidents of the fight are associated with individual regiments and small detachments. Of British troops, rank and file, including the Germans only 26,295 fought at Waterloo, of whom 7448 were cavalry. The total of 37,603 "present" out of a paper strength of 43,133 (of whom 4174 were in hospital) included artillerymen, sappers and miners, the waggon train and the staff corps, the seven battalions which garrisoned Brussels, Antwerp, Ostend and Nieuport, the four battalions on detachment at Hals, and a cavalry regiment at Courtrai. Wellington's infantry (18,847) were organised in 36 battalions, his cavalry in 21 regiments. The cavalry brigades were commanded by Arentschildt, Dornberg, Grant, Ponsonby, Somerset, Vandeleur and Vivian. The infantry brigadiers were Adam, Byng, Du Plat, Halkett, Kempt, Lambert, Maitland, Mitchell, Ompteda and Pack. The divisional commanders were Cook (1st), Clinton (2nd), Alten (3rd), Colville (4th), and Picton (5th). The artillery under Sir George Wood formed 26 to 30 batteries of 6 guns.

All units save six that fought at Waterloo were Peninsular regiments, but there were lacking some forty

<sup>1</sup> The King's German Legion. These were Hanoverian regulars (7000) in British pay, viz. 5 regiments of cavalry, 8 battalions of infantry, with 18 guns, which had done yeoman service in the Peninsula.

regiments which after the battle of Toulouse had been scattered to the ends of the earth to garrison India and the Colonies, and their places were filled by Dutch and Belgian troops—Netherlanders whose only success in war had been gained under Napoleon—and by Hanoverians, Brunswickers and Nassauers. On the left of the chaussée stood the British brigades of Kempt, Pack and Lambert, with their attached Hanoverian brigades under Vincke and Best, and the Netherland brigades of Bylandt and Saxe-Weimar (Perponcher's Division); in all some 20,000 bayonets. These troops were destined to receive the attack of D'Erlon's Corps composed of 4 divisions of infantry and 1 division of cavalry. On the right of the chaussée were placed the British brigades of Maitland, Byng, Mitchell, Adam and Sir Colin Halkett, with their attached brigades of Hanoverians under Kielmansegge and Hugh Halkett, and of German brigades under Ompteda and Du Plat: the Brunswick Division and the Nassau Brigade were also stationed here. These troops were to encounter Reille's Corps composed of 4 divisions of infantry and 1 cavalry division, besides part of the Imperial Guard. The Netherland brigades of Ditmers and Aubreme (Chasse's Division) held Braine l'Alleud and communicated with the detached force at Hal until after the action had developed, and then were brought up on our right.

The Duke<sup>1</sup> writing thirty years afterwards thus summarised the battle: Three formidable attacks were delivered by the French between Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte; the first by cavalry, the second by infantry, the third by infantry and cavalry combined. The first attack caused our artillerymen to abandon their guns, removing horses and limbers to the rear, and seek shelter within the infantry squares. Then the squares were moved forward, the French cavalry retired, the British cavalry charged through the intervals, and line was reformed. The second attack

<sup>1</sup> In his letter to Sir Walter Scott on August 17, 1815, he says: "We were attacked first with infantry only, then with cavalry only, lastly and principally with cavalry and infantry mixed."

was met in line, and Adams' Brigade was wheeled forward so that its right rested on Hougoumont and thus its fire struck the left flank of the French column advancing across its front. The third attack was prepared for by arranging the infantry four deep, in which formation fire could be delivered while solid resistance was offered to the charge of French cavalry, and again a brigade was wheeled forward to deliver flanking fire. The enemy having been repulsed for the third time and Zieten's Prussian Corps having now arrived on our left the Duke ordered a general advance of his army to sweep Napoleon from the field.

The Hougoumont post continued throughout the battle to attract fresh bodies of French troops from Reille's Corps and throw them back in disorder without, however, carrying conviction to the French commanders that the post was impregnable. Napoleon's attacks on our centre were delivered with Friand's and Morand's Divisions of the Imperial Guard, Guyot's and Desnouette's Divisions of the Guard cavalry and Kellermann's and Milhaud's Corps of the reserve cavalry, supported by such portions of the corps of Reille and D'Erlon as had not been engaged. On our left D'Erlon's Corps had won ground, seizing La Haye Sainte and establishing their riflemen on the roof of the building and so supporting with fire the attacks upon our centre. The preparation of these attacks no doubt cost Napoleon and Marshal Ney much anxious consideration and yet the conflict did not strike the Duke as one in which any real tactical skill had to be met and overcome. Writing to Beresford on July 2 he says :

"Never did I see such a pounding match. Napoleon did not manoeuvre at all. He just moved forward in the old style in columns and was driven off in the old style. The only difference was that he mixed cavalry with his infantry and supported both with an enormous quantity of artillery. I had the infantry for some time in squares, and we had the French cavalry walking about us as if they had been our own."

Speaking of the formation in which the French guard

approached Adam's Brigade, an officer of the 52nd Foot admitted that he could not discern the formation of the enemy in his front, so dense was the smoke, while others in the same regiment declared that the Imperial Guard was "in two columns in direct echelon, the left considerably to the rear." But an officer of the 71st Foot—which stood on the right of the 52nd and supported the latter in its charge—says: "The Imperial Guard were either in square or column: I do not think they were in line: we charged three squares of the Guard: . . . the 52nd pursued what had been their right square and the other two fell to our lot." Then a corporal of the 95th Foot testifies that "the French came up in three columns abreast of each other: they looked like quarter distance columns." Who shall decide which, if any, of these accounts is the true one?

The confusion that is characteristic of a great battle may be further exemplified: by mistaking the word "par" for the word "de" in an expression like "*la colonne par division*" a complete reversal of procedure might occur in forming up troops for an attack. The column "*par division*" was a column of double companies at wheeling distance, capable of forming line to the front or to a flank, whereas the column "*de division*" consisted of eight deployed battalions placed one behind the other. It was the latter formation, we are told, that D'Erlon adopted for his attack; and this solid mass of men, twenty-four deep on a front of hardly two hundred yards, moved over difficult ground, up and down slopes exposed to fire from guns and muskets, without being able to return a shot except from the muskets in the front rank; for even to halt and deliver one volley would bring the whole column to a standstill. But the French always screened their attacks with skirmishers, and the artillery covered the advance of D'Erlon's column whenever its disappearance in a hollow "*unmasked*" the French batteries.

Sir Evelyn Wood has devoted a volume to eulogising the work of our cavalry during the campaign. On

Sunday the heavy brigades charged at 2 P.M. under Lord Uxbridge, who launched his squadrons (2600 sabres) at D'Erlon's Corps—Ponsonby's Brigade attacking on the left and Somerset's Brigade on the right of the chaussée. The swordsmen were too eager in pursuit and could not be rallied: they suffered heavy loss in the subsequent retirement; but Sir Evelyn Wood's amazing statement that "before nightfall the survivors of the seven heavy regiments were re-formed into one squadron of only fifty files" must be compared with official returns which show that the two brigades numbered 1436 at the close of the battle, after a loss of 1176 men. In this affair the action of Vandeleur's Brigade of light dragoons who attacked D'Erlon's Corps in support of the heavy brigades was prompt and effective. At 3.30 P.M. the light brigades of Sir G. Grant, Sir W. Dornberg and Sir F. Arentschildt came forward on our right and charged French cuirassiers and lancers.

Wellington then penned a note to Lord Uxbridge: "We ought to have more of the cavalry between the two high roads, that is to say three brigades at least, besides the brigade in observation on the right and besides the Belgian cavalry and the Duke of Cumberland's hussars. One heavy and one light brigade might remain on the left." At 5.30 P.M. the light brigades of Sir I. Vandeleur and Sir H. Vivian<sup>1</sup> advanced between Hougomont and La Belle Alliance against the Imperial Guard, some cuirassiers and lancers, and remaining on the field initiated the pursuit, but were relieved by the Prussian and Brunswick cavalry at 10 P.M. Many isolated encounters by small bodies of horse took place like that in which Lord Uxbridge himself led a single squadron against some French cavalry. Somerset's Brigade at one time formed in single rank to fill up a

<sup>1</sup> The Duke pencilled his own orders to Sir H. Vivian, and when the Prussians had reached St. Lambert, said: "Be so kind as to send a patrol from left by Ohain to communicate with them. Have you sent a patrol to Braine Le Château?" This point was six miles westward towards Hals.

gap in the infantry line. Our nine regiments of British light cavalry lost 821 out of 3788 men; but our light brigades included five regiments of the King's German Legion, whose solid services Sir Evelyn Wood has entirely passed over.

To the labours of Major J. H. Leslie, who has digested the records of the Royal Regiment of Artillery to good purpose, we are indebted for many a glimpse at the fight in following the movements of some of the batteries engaged. Captain Mercer's troop of 9-pounders having bivouacked overnight in an orchard by the farm of Mont St. Jean moved out on Sunday morning and started up the chaussée. About noon Mercer was ordered back: then he was directed to come into action on the right and in front of the 14th Foot (Mitchell's Brigade) which he found lying down in square. The Duke had warned the artillery to refrain from engaging the French guns and to reserve their fire for the assaulting troops only. But it seems that Mercer, tired of standing idle and annoyed by the fire of some French guns (4-pounders) emplaced west of the Nivelles road, opened a slow, deliberate fire at them and so provoked a French battery with heavier metal, which had concealed itself to the east of the Nivelles road, with unfortunate results to his command; and, moreover, his evasion of the Duke's instructions caused another officer to be censured, since the Duke was watching the affair and believed that Sandham's Brigade<sup>1</sup> had brought on the French bombardment.

About 3 p.m. Mercer's troop galloped forward to take up a position in the first line, and Mercer was now told of the Duke's positive orders that when the French cavalry charged our gunners were to take refuge within the nearest infantry square. Mercer's battery stood between two squares of Brunswick infantry and Mercer, taking stock of them, came to the conclusion that the Brunswickers would dissolve

<sup>1</sup> A battery of horse artillery was called a troop, a battery of field artillery a brigade, in 1815.



the moment his gunners left their pieces; so he resolved to fight his guns and let the gunners take their chance. Perhaps the example set by Mercer's men improved the moral of the Brunswickers, but such disregard of orders and similar peccadilloes brought the artillery into bad odour with the Duke. Mercer's battery was next emplaced where a natural epaulment screened it, but he had hardly time to deploy his six guns before a body of heavy cavalry advanced to seize the position. Then without apparent reason the French horse wheeled about, to the great relief of the Brunswickers who were very young troops, and in retreating afforded a remunerative target for Mercer's guns, each loaded with round and case shot. Later, an attack was repulsed by his opening fire at point-blank range upon French cavalry moving at a slow trot. This mounted attack had been prepared by infantry skirmishers whose galling fire, however, Mercer refused to notice, true to his resolve not to waste ammunition on a mere screen. Other cavalry attacks in Mercer's vicinity added to the number of killed and wounded Frenchmen who began to form a rampart for his guns. Once the Duke and his staff came from the rear and rode across the front of the battery, masking its fire. Again his guns had to cease fire while our infantry advanced in order to close with the enemy, but as the British line moved down the slope a body of French on the far hillside came in full view and Mercer joyfully ranged on this target.

Yet Mercer was to undergo a terrible experience before the battle ended. A battery having suddenly opened fire upon him from a flank at 400 yards' range, Mercer turned upon his aggressor with his left section of guns, and an artillery duel went on until a Brunswick officer galloped up to say that Mercer's target was a Prussian battery! Mercer at once ceased fire, but the Prussian guns continued their efforts to destroy the British battery until a Belgian horse battery unlimbered upon the Prussian flank and drove them off; but Mercer had lost 140 out of 200 horses and his guns were jumbled



into a heap of locked trails as the result of a blunder not uncommon in war.

Lloyd's Brigade of 9-pounders came into action in front of Alten's Division to the left of Hougoumont. The guns were charged half a dozen times by lancers and cuirassiers, who were received with canister; but the French cavalry rode into the battery and a French officer killed Major Lloyd. Rogers' Brigade of 9-pounders took post behind a hedge in front of Picton's Division, east of the chaussée, and here faced D'Erlon's attack until masked by the infantry counter-attack which preceded the charge of our heavy cavalry. Then the battery moved to its right, west of the chaussée, and finally closed on Adams' Brigade, where it resisted the attack of the Imperial Guard by a flanking fire. Two guns of this battery joined in the pursuit and bivouacked beyond La Belle Alliance. Sandham's Brigade of 9-pounders, on the right, fired 1100 rounds—mainly at the French posted on the high ground south of Hougoumont—and were only once disturbed by a charge of French cuirassiers. Bolton's Brigade (four 9-pounders and two howitzers) with Clinton's Division was posted 700 yards from Hougoumont, and detached three guns to silence a French battery which was annoying our troops in and about the château: within an hour these guns rejoined after accomplishing their task. At 3 P.M. the brigade was moved to the right to receive the attack of the French Guard with canister and opened fire at 200 yards' range. The French steadily marched forward under this intolerable hail of bullets until within 50 yards of the guns, and then they faced about having reached the limit of their endurance. The crisis was now at hand for which Wellington had waited, and the general advance began which masked the fire of Bolton's battery.

Sinclair's Brigade of 9-pounders (5) and 5.5 howitzers (1) formed part of the reserve artillery—posted on the left of the chaussée behind the village of Mont St. Jean—and first came into action to the right rear of La Haye Sainte. Smoke obscured the view and

the battery was nearly out of ammunition when the guns were charged by cuirassiers at 3 P.M., but our 1st Dragoons countercharged and saved the guns. The battery then retired behind an infantry square, except the left piece which the cuirassiers had surrounded. Having replenished his ammunition Sinclair retook his old position, though the ground was so heavy that the gun wheels sunk to their naves. Finally, he was ordered to move to the right near Hougoumont, where French columns were seen advancing, and here the battery remained until the end of the battle and bivouacked for the night amid the debris of the Imperial Guard. The struggle on the left of our defences has been described by an infantry officer in Pack's Brigade (Picton's Division) up to the moment when wounded by a musket-ball he quitted the field and made his way to Brussels. Pack's men (1st, 42nd, 44th, 92nd Regiments)—who had been somewhat depressed until the Duke of Richmond spread the news that Blücher was on the way—came under the fire of the French artillery planted along the opposite crest at 1 P.M.

D'Erlon's Corps then advanced in three columns, the left upon La Haye Sainte, the right upon our main position, the third column being held in reserve. The Netherlander brigade under Bylandt sustained the first shock and retired behind a hedge, and so matters remained until after the capture of the orchard of La Haye Sainte by the French, when the three columns covered by the fire of their artillery attacked in right earnest. The French "with their drums beating, colours flying, and eagles soaring above their huge head-dresses," ascended the ridge and were checked by Bylandt's Netherlanders for half an hour, but about 3 P.M. Bylandt's five battalions—for the most part Dutch militiamen—began to give way, and presently "the whole corps ran as fast as their feet could carry them."

The position vacated by the Netherlanders was immediately occupied by our 1st Regiment (called the "Royals") and the 44th Regiment, who opposed the

further advance of the French for some time and then also yielded ground. Sir Denis Pack<sup>1</sup>—the narrative goes on—now galloped to the Gordon Highlanders and cried: "Ninety-second, you must charge! All the troops in your front have given way." This regiment, reduced to 220 effectives after its fight at Quatre Bras, then formed in line and "presented a front nearly equal to that of the enemy; but the French in close column had more than ten such fronts to support the one in view." The 92nd moved forward with cheers and "when we were about twenty paces from them they, panic-struck, wheeled about." Ponsonby's Brigade of heavy cavalry now fell upon the French column. Some of the French threw away their knapsacks, arms and accoutrements and fled; others stood their ground till cut down. "As the prisoners passed us on their way to the rear, one and all of them declared that we had cut to pieces the flower of the French army."

This repulse had the effect of causing the French to abandon Papelotte which they had seized from Saxe-Weimar's Brigade an hour before. La Haye Sainte was a roadside farmhouse that stood abutting on the chaussée about 300 yards in front of our first line of defence: its orchard was on the south side and its garden on the north side: in the north-west corner of the garden was a barn the door of which, like the garden gate, opened westward. Baring's Battalion (Ompteda's German Brigade) defended this post, aided by some Nassau troops from Saxe-Weimar's Netherland Brigade.<sup>2</sup> What went on here it is now hard to say, for the exploits of our allies<sup>3</sup> have hardly received bare justice at the hands of English historians. There was first a struggle at the

<sup>1</sup> Pack's Brigade had marched on Friday, 1875 strong, had lost 980 at Quatre Bras, furnished only 745 bayonets on Sunday, and lost 50 per cent. of this number before the battle ended.

<sup>2</sup> The Prince of Saxe-Weimar's Brigade of Nassau troops were part of Perponcher's Division of Netherlanders and must not be confused with the Nassau contingent under General Kruse. The Saxe-Weimar Brigade had also detached one battalion to Hougoumont.

<sup>3</sup> The King's German Legion lost 1472 all ranks on June 18.

orchard and then at the garden; the barn was set on fire by the French and the fire was extinguished by the Nassau men with their camp kettles; and finally at 5 P.M. the farmhouse itself was stormed and taken by the French.

Until this hour the garrison had proved a thorn in the side of every French attack within musket range, but when the post fell into D'Erlon's hands and the fire of this miniature fortress was directed northwards our brigades by the chaussée had need of all their steadfastness. The French at the same time possessed themselves of a sandpit and knoll from which hitherto our riflemen (95th Regiment) had commanded the chaussée, and from which the French now scourged with fire the 27th Foot who lost two-thirds of their strength. The Papelotte-La Haye post further east was taken and retaken, but was still held by Saxe-Weimar's Brigade when Zieten's Prussians advancing by the Smohain valley prolonged our line eastward. With similar vicissitudes the French were battling on the right (west) of the chaussée, where Halkett's Brigade (Alten's Division) composed of the 30th, 33rd, 69th, and 73rd Regiments was posted, and Major Macready of the 30th, who published his journal in 1852, tells us that his "light" company and the grenadiers of the 73rd were skirmishing in the low ground, opposed by French tirailleurs, when a storm of canister destroyed two-thirds of his men. The French were then preparing their cavalry attack. Macready rejoined the brigade<sup>1</sup> then standing up in two squares, each square of two regiments. "The enemy's cavalry galloped up and crossed the crest of our position. Our guns were abandoned and the French formed about 100 paces in our front. Their first charge was magnificent. As soon as they broke into a gallop the cuirassiers bent their heads so that the peaks of their helmets looked like vizors and they seemed cased in armour from the plume to the saddle. Not a shot was fired till they were within thirty yards.

<sup>1</sup> Halkett's Brigade had marched on Friday, 2250 strong, had lost 368 at Quatre Bras, and on Sunday lost 778.

The effect was magical. Through the smoke we could see helmets falling, cavaliers starting from their seats, horses plunging; many dismounted and the more daring backed their horses upon our bayonets. They reformed and repeated these attacks for two hours (4 to 6 P.M.).” Ammunition ran short until an artillery waggon came up and emptied two or three casks of cartridges into the square.

The French artillery plied the squares with round shot and grape between the cavalry attacks. “A regiment of our light dragoons charged the cuirassiers and a body of Belgian cavalry was brought forward for the same purpose, but the Belgians suddenly halted and in spite of the exhortations of Sir Colin Halkett and the Prince of Orange wheeled about and fled. As they [the Belgians] passed the right face of our square the men unanimously took up their pieces and fired a volley into them.” The French cavalry at last took to “annoying us by a spirited and well-directed carbine fire.” French guns were pushed forward until within 70 paces and then they opened fire. “Their first discharge of grape blew seven men into the centre of the square.” The Duke visited this brigade—his two aides-de-camp were struck down near the square—and said in reply to Halkett’s entreaty for support: “It’s impossible, Halkett; you must hold your ground to the last man.”

The fighting at Hougomont was truly Homeric in quality and character. “The success of the battle,” said the Duke in after life, “turned upon the closing of the gates of Hougomont.” Without attaching undue weight to this conversational *exposé* it is clear from what happened at La Haye Sainte that failure to quickly gain these outworks to Wellington’s position upset Napoleon’s plans for the day. The Hougomont post formed a bastion to our defences on the right. The château lies about a furlong to the east of the Nivelles road and fills the north-west corner of an estate of which the south-east extremity is half a mile from La Belle Alliance. Our people could not prevent the

French seizing the small wood on the south side whence the Duke had reconnoitred his enemy : but their utmost efforts failed to expel our garrison from the orchards and buildings on the north side. The garrison had worked on the defences for twelve hours, loopholing the walls and constructing banquettes and a machicoulis gallery over the south gate ; then an abattis had been placed athwart the Nivelles road, and the garden wall screened by the hedgerows forty yards in front was converted into a parapet for musketry : a portion of the garrison fronted east and as long as the garrison of La Haye Sainte, a few furlongs distant, could bring fire to bear westward every French attack on our centre necessarily passed through a lane of hostile muskets on its way to its objective, and also on its way back to reform after repulse, and the flanks of the French columns suffered accordingly.

But in order to preserve our advantage at Hougoumont it became imperative to stem the torrent of French troops that surged against the buildings in rear with intent to isolate the garrison ; and here it was that personal combats took place between men of giant frame and ardent temper. Byng's Brigade of Guards has monopolised the honours of the defence of Hougoumont, and the incident of closing the great north gate has given to five Coldstreamers a niche in the temple of fame : a colonel, a captain, a sergeant and two ensigns, shoulder to shoulder, strained their weight against the barrier to withstand the pressure from without, while the brave Frenchmen who had already gained entrance to the courtyard, now cut off from succour or retreat, were stilled with butt and bayonet. The defending forces at Waterloo lost some 15,000 officers and men on Sunday, which is testimony sufficient to the effect of the fire of French guns and muskets aided by the sabre and bayonet ; but these losses were not equally distributed either as regards the units or grades. The 27th Foot, for example, lost 478 out of 750, the 52nd Foot only 199 out of 1148 ; the 1st (Royals) had 6 officers killed and 25 wounded



out of 39, the 2nd Life Guards lost only 2 officers. But upon an average of casualties we may conclude that the pipeclay discipline of those days which we are so apt to ridicule possessed a virtue of its own. Certainly the ideal of soldierly bearing in action was then very different from what it is now. The infantry were trained to attack by marching forward under fire, keeping step with head erect and shoulders squared and preserving close touch at the elbow, the rank in rear filling up the gaps as they occurred in the front rank. It was deemed unmanly to even turn the head to escape wounds or death and shameful to lie down or take shelter without special orders. Officers were taught that their function was rather to lead than to direct and they set an example of gallant behaviour in battle which answered the needs of the time; for they lived in the prize-fighting era when neither man nor boy in England could refuse a challenge to a bout of fisticuffs; and a man in the ring, if he cannot win, must show his mettle by taking punishment gamely. These ideals so far prevailed that no ascertainable proportion of loss in battle would have extinguished the fighting spirit in a British corps of the period. The men lived hard and died hard without hope of reward for victory—a pair of boots to each survivor was the immediate solatium for their services at Waterloo—and with the certainty of such treatment, if killed or wounded, as would now bring down a storm of remonstrance in the name of common humanity.

Speculation is vain as to what would have happened if Napoleon had pushed his advantage from the point of support or pivot he had won at La Haye Sainte, reinforcing D'Erlon with his reserve and seizing the chaussée at Waterloo with the object of driving Wellington off his line of retreat; for we know that Wellington would never have occupied the Mont St. Jean position but for the assurance which had reached him that Blücher would come to his assistance; and Napoleon's conduct of the battle was conditioned by his knowledge that Wellington would receive



Blücher's support on his left, knowledge that reached him at 1 P.M. and caused him to detain Lobau's Corps and part of the Guard Corps a mile in rear at Plancenoit. The French official account dated Paris, June 21, states that Lobau's Corps and a cavalry division was retained "to oppose a Prussian corps which intended to fall upon our right flank." The tactical problem, therefore, for Wellington was how to hold on until Blücher arrived: the tactical problem for Napoleon was how to prevent their co-operation.

Blücher's report states that at daybreak Bülow's 4th and Pirch's 2nd Corps marched by St. Lambert to take up a position covered by the forest near Frischermont; that Ziethen's 1st Corps was to operate by Ohain on the right flank of the French; and that Thielman's 3rd Corps was to follow slowly and afford succour in case of need. At 4.30 P.M. only two brigades of Bülow's Corps had arrived at the covered position, as the difficulty of moving guns through the defile of St. Lambert had not been anticipated. The Prussian commander of these two brigades and a division of cavalry advanced at once upon what he believed to be the rear of the enemy's right wing. Towards 6 P.M. the news reached Blücher of Thielman's Corps being attacked near Wavre, but Blücher continued his march averring that "it was on the spot where he was and nowhere else that the affair was to be decided, and if the victory were obtained here any reverse sustained near Wavre was of little consequence." Blücher nourished the battle by putting in fresh troops as they arrived, but at 7.30 P.M. the issue was still in doubt, though the whole of Bülow's Corps was now on the field and also part of Pirch's Corps. At last the leading column of Ziethen's Corps appeared near the village of Smohain on the British left and pushed into the fight. Blücher says: "This movement decided the defeat of the enemy . . . his right wing was broken in three places . . . he abandoned his positions. Our troops rushed forward at the *pas de charge* and attacked him on all sides, while at the same time the whole English

line advanced": his narrative is not more imaginative than is permissible in official chronicles.

Blücher admits that the conditions for attack were in his favour: "The ground rose in an amphitheatre, so that our artillery could freely open its fire from the summits of a great many heights which rose gradually above each other, and in the intervals of which the troops descended into the plain." He declares too that the march of all the Prussian columns had been directed towards the farm of La Belle Alliance, which being in the middle of the French position and upon a height was visible from every side. The French, however, still preserved their line of retreat over the bridge of Genappe until the village of Plancenoit held by Duhesme's Division of the Guard—which fought as fiercely in defence of this post as our Guards fought at Hougoumont—was stormed by the Prussians under Bülow and Pirch about 9 p.m. Blücher now assembled his generals and gave orders for the last horse and the last man to be sent in pursuit<sup>1</sup> of the enemy. Meanwhile the French had obstructed the road with overturned carriages and the Prussians were met with musketry fire on attempting to enter the village of Genappe; but artillery was brought to bear and the place captured and here was found the travelling carriage which Napoleon had just abandoned in order to take horse. Moonlight favoured a pursuit, but at break of day it was estimated that about 40,000 French had escaped through Charleroi.

Napoleon's report confirms Blücher's account. He says: "The Prussian division whose movement had been foreseen engaged with the light troops of Lobau's Corps, spreading its fire upon our whole right flank; it was expedient before undertaking anything elsewhere to wait for the event of this attack, and all the means in reserve were ready to succour Count de Lobau and repulse the flank attack of the Prussian corps. This attack always prolonged itself perpendicularly upon

<sup>1</sup> Pirch's Corps was directed to cut off Grouchy from Namur, but failed to get beyond Mellery in time to intercept.

our right flank." Napoleon says that he now expected Grouchy to be marching upon the rear of the Prussians ensuring for the French "a signal success for next day: after eight hours' fire and charges of infantry and cavalry all the army saw with joy the battle gained." But Grouchy points out that "it was not till after 7 P.M. that I received the letter which directed me to march on St. Lambert and attack General Bülow." Meanwhile Grouchy<sup>1</sup> had attacked Thielman's Corps at Wavre, but could not eject the Prussians from that town; and at 3 A.M. on Monday Thielman counter-attacked. The Prussians were repulsed and the village of Bierge fell into Grouchy's hands, and from this pivot he launched a successful attack upon the heights of Wavre; so that the French were in front of Rosieres, preparing to march on Brussels, when news came of the rout of the main army at Mont St. Jean on Sunday. Grouchy at once retired to Namur, followed by the Prussians who attacked his rearguard, and held the town with a detachment until 8 P.M. on Monday in order to cover his further retreat through a long defile to Dinant. Napoleon's tactical failure on June 18 was rooted in his fear of the Prussians; for although Blücher's army at daybreak was some twelve miles from the scene of action, and even so late as 5.30 P.M. had brought upon the field less than 15,000 infantry and cavalry with 40 guns, it had caused Napoleon to detach or detain in reserve more than one-half of his infantry (88 battalions), nearly one-half of his artillery (19 batteries), and nearly one-third of his cavalry (61 squadrons), with which it may be supposed he could have administered the *coup de grâce* to Wellington early in the afternoon.

A dreadful picture of the ruined army has been left by a French staff officer. A group of generals—D'Erlon, Bachelu, Reille, Foy and Jamin among them—found themselves on Sunday night near the Hougomont farm with a remnant of Foy's Division. They directed

<sup>1</sup> Grouchy's force consisted of the corps of Gerard and Vandamme and the cavalry corps of Pajol and Exelmans. See page 56.

their march "like a troop of mourners" to Quatre Bras, where they found Lobau alone with his staff: his entire corps had dispersed. Foy's three hundred here joined the torrent of fugitives, and the group of generals with an escort of four troopers continued to wander southwards till they came to the village of Vieville and by threats procured a meal of bread, butter and beer. Then seizing a villager as guide they marched four leagues through Roux to Marchiennes, where at 6 A.M. they found Ney in the sleep of exhaustion. The forlorn party passed through Thuin and slept in a copse till noon. Presently appeared a strong column of cavalry, which they followed until a regiment of horse debouching from a wood caused the cavalry to cry "the Prussians!" and fly for their lives. "The troops that thus alarmed them were not a tenth part of their number and were in reality our own 8th Hussars, who wore green uniforms." But the panic-stricken French cavalry never halted till they reached Beaumont whence the Emperor had issued his commands five days ago, now a scene of riot and pillage: an officer who attempted to restore order was bayoneted: and then the narrator confesses that, "worn out with fatigue, covered with blood and suffering severe pain from the wound" he gave way to the general demoralisation "and let myself be inertly borne along with the rushing mass" to Landrecies, a fortress on the upper Sambre.

The disintegration of the French army was unexpected. Neither Wellington nor Blücher had succeeded in intercepting any considerable body of the enemy. The moon gave light for marching, the chaussée to Charleroi was clear and ample time had been available for preparations for retreat. Evidently the French were unencumbered with wounded, since Wellington next day reported 5000 prisoners. The most ordinary military precautions would have ensured the baggage and reserve artillery being south of Genappe under the protection of troops that had done their devoir early in the day: and the Prussian troops ven-

tured no further than Genappe till daylight in spite of Blücher's energetic language. The débâcle, then, can only be explained upon the assumption that Napoleon, Soult and Ney as generals had failed—disgracefully failed—in their duty to their own men. They were morally guilty of desertion and there was the less excuse for this crime in that it was characteristic of a French army to swiftly recover from a reverse. Soult had defended the Pyrenees for six months with the army which Wellington had routed at Vittoria, and why were fortresses maintained if not for the succour of a beaten army? Maubeuge was within twenty-five miles of Charleroi and it held out against the Prussians for three weeks. At Sedan and Mezieres were hundreds of guns with appropriate stores: the resources of France were enormous. Lyons prepared for defence was a pivot of manœuvre for Suchet's corps, and the 5th Corps also intact was at Strassburg under General Rapp. But Napoleon<sup>1</sup> was now less concerned with war than with politics, and his flight to Paris—where his account of the battle was published in the *Journal de l'Empire* of June 22—signified his desire for peace at any price if his reign could be prolonged or his infant son's succession be secured.

Meanwhile the army that had been shattered on June 18 was instinctively re-forming under its old leaders, D'Erlon and Reille, and was preparing to dispute the line of the Aisne and the Oise in the event of any aid or incentive reaching it from the base of operations; and all fantastic stories of pursuit notwithstanding the French had seen no enemy for eight days when D'Erlon attacked Zieten's advanced guard at Compiègne. Soult had assumed command of the army a few days before when Grouchy had reached Soissons and gained touch with Reille and D'Erlon who had on June 25 collected part of their corps on the Aisne.

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon's latest apologist M. Louis Navez speaks of orders issued by the Emperor on June 19-20 at Philippeville and Laon, but the fact remains that by quitting the army he lost control of it and *ipso facto* extinguished his claim to govern France.

Blücher had on Monday June 19 set out from Genappe with Bülow and Zieten to seek the French main army, while Pirch and Thielman followed in the tracks of Grouchy. Grouchy's rearguard handled Pirch very roughly outside Namur, but at 9 p.m. on June 20 it evacuated the town and, crossing the river on the parapets of the barricaded and burning bridge, followed its main body. Grouchy used all the artifices of a retreating commander to delay the march of the Prussians from Namur to Dinant—twenty-eight miles—and from this point his march was unmolested; for the Prussians had now to find detachments to reduce the French fortresses, Landrecies, Maubeuge, Avesnes and Rocroi, and it would have gone hard with the invaders if the garrisons of these places had been animated by good news from the field army. A week after the battle Blücher still lingered round Beaumont and Avesnes. On June 24 Grouchy marched from Mexieres to Rethel, Reille and D'Erlon from Laon to Soissons; Zieten captured the fortress of Guise, Thielman moved from Avesnes to Nouvion, Bülow reached St. Quentin. Wellington's army remained at Le Cateau waiting for pontoons and stores, and vexing its commander by its wonted indiscipline now that the fighting was done.

Holding the roads between the Oise and the Marne Kellermann's Brigade of heavy cavalry ejected Bülow's Prussians from Senlis after Bülow had seized the bridge of Creil. But the Prussians recovered Senlis and held it against another attack by D'Erlon. On June 28 Zieten's Corps approached Grouchy at Villets Coterets, but Grouchy attacked and drove back the Prussians until a panic seized his troops, who were then led to Paris by Meux and Lagny twice crossing the Marne. Reille retreating on Gonesse to unite with D'Erlon was attacked by Zeiten's Corps. Wellington's army had no more fighting after June 18 than was sufficient to overcome the resistance of the citadel of Cambrai—which the Duke at once invited Louis XVIII to occupy—and the fortress of Peronne, while Prince Frederick of Orange took possession of Valenciennes and Le Quesnoi.



At Gonesse on July 2 Wellington wrote to Blücher pointing out that "the attack of Paris is a matter of great risk" and proposing to await the arrival of Prince Wrede's army. Blücher had then crossed the Seine at St. Germain's and, having seized the Versailles road, desired to storm Paris from the south-west. Zielen's Corps established itself on the heights of Meudon and in the village of Issy. On July 3 the French attacked and were repulsed, and then Marshal Davout agreed upon a military convention under which the French army should evacuate the capital and withdraw behind the Loire, taking with it the whole of its *matériel*—field guns, military chest, horses and regimental property of every description.

In this tame fashion the great war ended, but as Wellington sagaciously remarked "it would be ridiculous to suppose that the allies would have been in possession of Paris in a fortnight after one battle fought . . . if the disposition of the inhabitants had led them to oppose the allies." And on this ground the Duke firmly resisted Marshal Blücher and others who believed that the time was arrived to mortify the French people by exactions, confiscations and wanton destruction. For the last time our Waterloo army paraded on July 24, the battalions varying in strength from 350 to 900 men, and the manoeuvres in the plain of St. Denis showed the Emperor of Russia how the field of Salamanca was won. The spectators who thronged the slopes of Montmartre, it need hardly be said, were composed wholly of the foreigners in Paris. In November the army was broken up and, after 9 regiments of cavalry and 25 battalions of infantry had been selected to form the new army of occupation, the forces were marched to Calais to take ship for England.



# V

THE exigencies of space prevent more than bare allusion to Wellington's management for two years of the delicate situation created by the second restoration of Louis XVIII to the French throne, and his maintenance there by foreign bayonets. The collection of a huge indemnity from France and the recovery of objects of art stolen by successive revolutionary governments were among the ungrateful tasks imposed upon the only man wholly trusted by each party to the coalition. Even the revolutionist leader, Thibaudeau, declared after the publication of the dispatches: "Nous avons fait injustice à cet homme." The Duke's influence was such that the friends of Marshal Ney refused to credit his inability to save that fine soldier: and Napoleon reserved for his conqueror his sole act of vindictiveness in rewarding the person who attempted the Duke's assassination. For many years he towered above all his contemporaries, and yet drew from the Czar Alexander the admission: "Je l'aime comme une matresse." The picture of him left by Lady Frances Shelley in her *Diary* shows the Duke "absorbed in dancing, laughing, revelling till some chance question or the hour of business brought him back to affairs. On the instant the world would drop off him: he was concentrated, caught up, terse in word, clear in brain, weighty, imperious."

Wellington returned to England in time to celebrate his fiftieth birthday, and although the long peace in Europe was regularly punctuated by wars in our overseas dominions the Duke was never again called upon for service in the field, and revisited Belgium only to

act as cicerone to the new King, George IV, when that Sovereign went to view the scene of the great battle the year Napoleon died.<sup>1</sup> His public life from this time forth is identified with our domestic politics. In his private capacity he was the magnet of a brilliant society, a model landlord and a secret alms-giver. He hunted with the Vine hounds, was a votary of Jenny Lind, a voracious reader and a judicious collector of pictures. He became a Cabinet Minister under Lord Liverpool, master-general of the ordnance and lord high constable. He attended as the nation's representative the congress at Verona, and so restrained the Emperor of Russia and the French King who succeeded Louis from interference with the internal affairs of Italy and Spain during a period of revolution. Wellington also patched up a quarrel between Russia and Turkey, and on the accession of the Emperor Nicholas he was despatched to St. Petersburg as the personal representative of the Crown. He became constable of the Tower in 1826, and a year later succeeded the Duke of York as commander-in-chief, but resigned all these offices on quitting the Cabinet when Canning, whom he distrusted, became Prime Minister. In 1828 the King called upon the Duke to carry on the Government.

Wellington took office not to win fame, not to triumph over political rivals, but in order to initiate action, to take personal responsibility for unpopular measures and to govern in the sense of holding the balance. Of course he pleased nobody. He would neither become the tool of the Sovereign nor of a faction; far less would he become the tool of the mob. He watched events and steadied the Parliamentary coach; he bore with patience the usual calumnious attacks of the party in opposition, but called out Lord Winchelsea who accused him of designs upon the Protestant religion, and a bloodless duel was fought in Battersea Fields.

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon arrived at St. Helena in October 1815, and died there in May 1821, aged fifty-one; his remains were conveyed to Paris in 1840 for reinterment at the Hôtel des Invalides.

For three years the Duke ruled the kingdom in circumstances of grave difficulty, and then gave way to the promoters of a sweeping measure of Parliamentary reform, whose constituents displayed their patriotic fervour by breaking the windows of Apsley House. Meanwhile the Duke had yielded to the demand that the political disabilities of Roman Catholics should be removed, and only resisted what he believed to be the improper encroachment of a democracy upon the right of the fittest to govern. He was so far justified in his attitude that when a later Government passed a Bill to extend the franchise, and so altered the character of the House of Commons, "a feeling of reaction in the country" resulted in the passing of Coercion Acts and the conviction of O'Connell for sedition.

Wellington in 1834 was made Chancellor of the University of Oxford, though he had removed his sons from Christ Church and sent them to Cambridge; and when King William summoned him to act as Premier, in the absence of Peel in Rome, he again set aside all private considerations and became for three weeks practically a dictator. Peel then formed a new Government with the Duke as Foreign Minister, and this was his last political office though, as leader of the House of Lords and a member of the Cabinet, he continued to act as moderator and assist the Government of the day. In 1838 he advised the then commander-in-chief, Lord Hill, upon affairs in Afghanistan. In 1842 he again became head of the army by patent and for life. He sent Sir Charles Napier to India when the second Sikh War broke out, and displayed his old strategic skill in dealing with the Chartist menace without ever showing a soldier or a musket. Lord Ellesmere, meeting the Duke in Grosvenor Place in June 1844, noted in his diary: "He walked slow and stopped often to expatiate on the subject of Algiers and Morocco. Recognition and reverence of all as usual. Hats were taken off; passers made excuse for

stopping to gaze. Young surgeons on the steps of St. George's Hospital forgot their lecture and their patients, and even the butcher's boy pulled up his cart as he stopped at the gate of Apsley House." In 1845 he revised Lord Ellesmere's article on Waterloo for the *Quarterly Review*. Then in 1847 our relations with France—again about to establish a republic—became strained after thirty years of peace had witnessed the decay of our army and the total disappearance of our militia. The general staff had been disbanded: our weapons were obsolete and ordnance stores sold as lumber had never been replaced. The military machine had been suffered to fall to pieces in anticipation of the millennium. Now there was panic in high places and hasty consultations as to the state of our defences. The Duke was told of the situation, and he penned a masterly memoir to show that "we have no defence, or hope or chance of defence, excepting in our fleet." Words so solemn had never proceeded from one so competent to judge. His peroration is remarkable for a man so unemotional as Wellington:

"I am bordering upon seventy-seven years of age, passed in honour. I hope that the Almighty may protect me from being the witness of the tragedy, which I cannot persuade my contemporaries to take measures to avert."

The immediate danger passed away, but when five years later we embarked on the adventure known as the Crimean Campaign ten thousand English soldiers perished through the cumulative neglect of successive administrations.

Weighed down by honours accumulated during thirty years of service in the field—a royal duke now living, whose sponsors at baptism were the King of Prussia and the Prince of Waterloo, was given the name of Arthur—the octogenarian soldier and statesman breathed his last at Walmer Castle in 1852, a few months before France again elected a Buonaparte to the throne. The great Englishman sleeps beneath the

marble of Alfred Stevens in the cathedral of St. Paul, but his monument will be found in his imperishable despatches and the wisest of queens pronounced his epitaph in saying: "He was the pride and the genius, as it were, of the country."

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